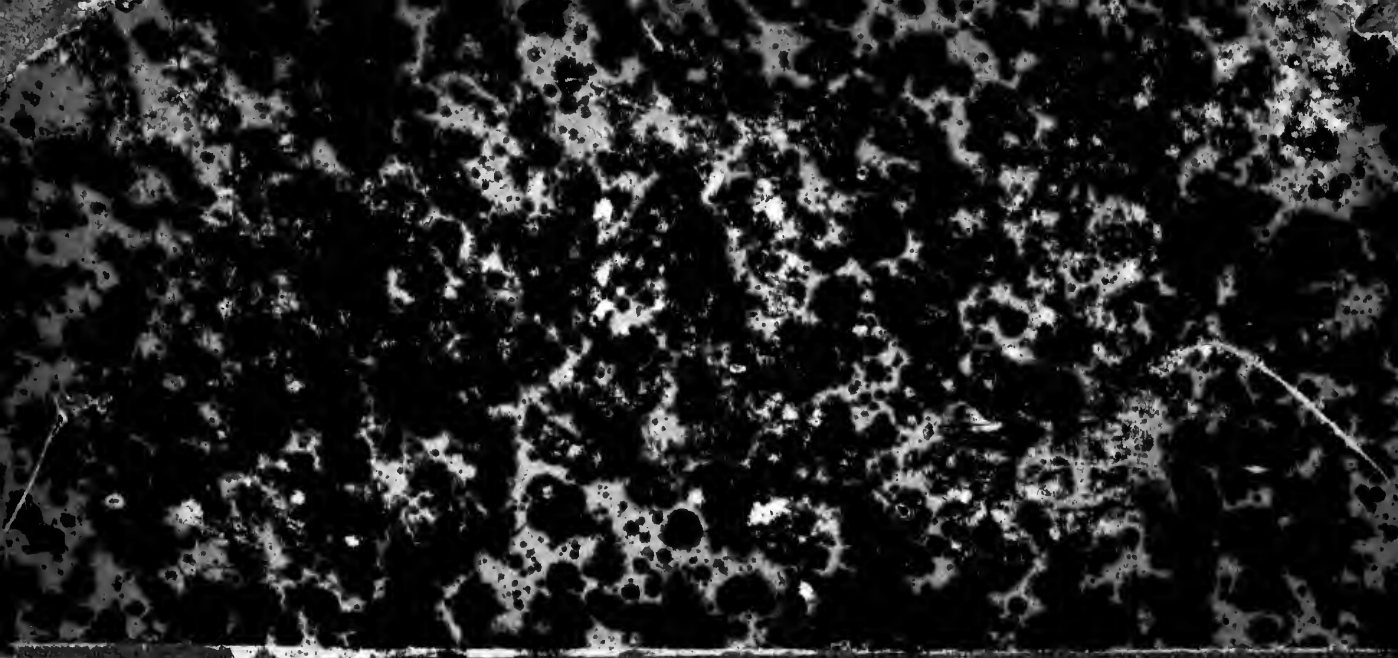

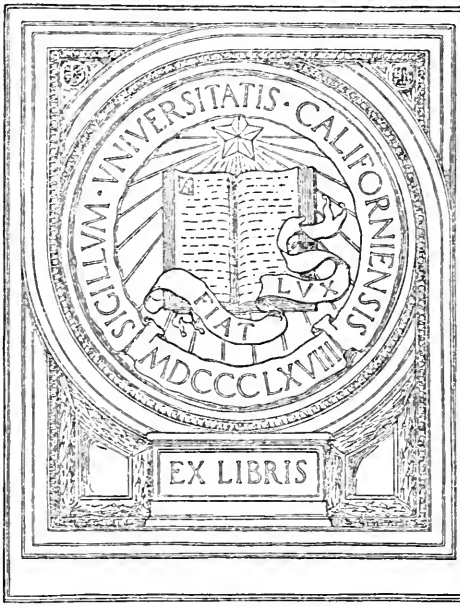

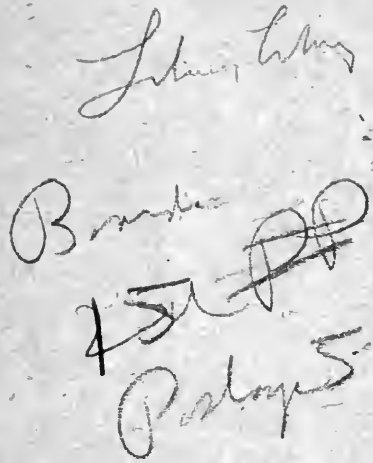

THEORY OF TEACHING,

WITH A FEW

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY A TEACHER.

THE MORE ONE LOVES THE ART, AND INDEED THE BETTER ONE STUDIES IT, THE LESS ONE IS SATISFIED. THIS MADE TITIAN WRITE UNDER HIS PICTURES *faciebat*, SIGNIFYING THAT THEY WERE ONLY IN PROGRESS.—*Northcote's Conversations.*

BOSTON:
E. P. PEABODY.
1841.

S. N. DICKINSON, Printer,
52 Washington Street.

THESE Letters are part of a real correspondence, begun in order to systematize the writer's own theory and practice. The position of governess was assumed as the most favorable one for carrying out completely her ideas on education.

In the humbler walks of literature, are many books which supply to those who live in retirement the place of society, by freeing them from prejudice and inducing thought. Such books must be considered as the conversation of those who have attended to a particular subject, and therefore valuable to others who are ignorant of it. It is as one of this class that the present correspondence claims for itself a reading.

LETTERS.

I.

My Dear Mary:

Your letter of warning and expostulation came too late: the fatal step is already taken; I am a ministering servant in the house of another; expending my energies for children not my own; exposed to those clashings and misunderstandings which you describe as more fearful than the shock of war. Yes, I am a governess, and, in spite of your predictions, hope to benefit others without losing my own tranquillity. Do not urge upon me that it is an unnatural relation. No position is an unnatural one, in which we can be of use.

'Look not so earnestly on me as if my fate were a sad one —
Joyfully the sister her brother serves, serves also her elders;
Still is her life an everlasting going and coming,
A bearing and waiting, preparing and toiling for others.
Well is it for her when by usage no way is too weary,
When never the needle seems too fine nor the office too petty;
And the long hours of the night are as those of the day-time —
Twenty men put together could not endure all her troubles,
Neither shall they — yet nevertheless they shall see and be thankful.

All we wish is to feel that we have not lived in vain. To serve is always our destiny and our delight: the mode of serving we can sometimes choose.

Would you confine us to the few original relations of children, friends, wives, and the few occupations of tending flocks and flowers? No, my dear Mary, civilized life, with its many wants and many needy ones, brings new stations,

and this of governess seems to me to be one of the most simple and useful. You will tell me, that it is more difficult to deal with persons than things; that in this more complicated world there is need of nicer traits of character; that dignity, delicacy, reserve, must be added to the virtues which are sufficient for a ruder life; that more prudence and wisdom are needed; for the great world is obliged to punish many errors which the primitive world forgave.

Do not urge against me my love of independence, my decided opinions, my ardor of character; these shall not be monsters erecting their ears, and bristling at every shadow; I will smooth their shaggy manes, and make them strong steeds to bear me over every obstacle.

Seriously, my dear Mary, I cannot conceive that any thing we have in us need ever be a stumbling-block. The gift never comes without the power to direct it. It is our wants, our short-comings which ruin us. You will find that I shall walk on this new and slippery path with some frights and stumblings, but with success, for I have a guide who never fails; it is Truth. If I am faithful to my ideas, loving to the children, open as noonday with their parents, what have I to fear? Are we not everywhere exposed to the faults of others? And is not this a sufficient defence? But how can I speak of woman as needing a defence? — has she not in her sympathy that which makes the danger of personal clashing disappear? When the old are rigid with me, I will remember by what cruel teachings such opinions have been forced upon them; when the young disappoint and thwart me, I will remember they know not what they strive against. When I see any thing that I cannot approve, I will suspend my judgment until I see the heart and circumstances of the sinner.

As we grow older our sympathy flows less readily, but it embraces a wider field: if this and justice and sincerity will not bear me safely on, they may fold their celestial wings, and I will henceforth trudge along the highways of prudence and expediency.

It will be strange indeed, if my love of independence harm me, for it is that which has suggested this course. I am aware that in seeking my own support, I offer spirit-

ual for temporal things, and it is a barter in which the delicacy and the loss are oftenest on the wrong side. But I think we owe it to the spiritual services to assert their real worth; and having fixed this in my own opinion, I shall feel no delicacy in receiving an equivalent. At any rate, the unpleasantness would exist in any other mode of earning a living; and here, the love of all around me will soften it as much as possible.

I need not tell you how wise, tender, and considerate, is Mr. O., nor how sweet and loving is his gentle wife; naturally charming, their love for each other has brought their characters almost to perfection. You know them by my frequent description; but I must tell you, that to the love I have always felt for his character, is added the strongest gratitude for his kindness to me. How delightful it is to receive kindness from those whose qualities we admired before! It sanctions our affection, and gives us a right to turn upon our benefactor the unsatisfied love which followed distant and strange virtues. This friend is rich in blessings; he wants nothing; I can give him nothing: but by devoting myself to his children I can show him that his kindness was bestowed on no insensible heart; and if love and gratitude can enlighten, I shall be the wisest teacher on earth.

How much do I now regret that I never took a more active and particular interest in your school!

The education both of old and young has always been my hobby; indeed, life always appears to me as an education, and is more interesting in this view of it, than in any other. I have thought and talked enough about education, quite to weary friends who took no particular interest in it, and I had a general idea of what was most desirable to be obtained, and how to obtain it. I have been with children sufficiently to know also how much they can do, and what treatment they require. But this knowledge has only been elaborated in my private workshop, for my own particular use, to suit my own taste and position; it should be corrected by experience and a wider knowledge, before it can be applied to other cases.

I might have enriched myself with all your stores of wisdom and experience, had I anticipated a necessity for them.

How many such past opportunities do I now recal with regret! When will philosophers and world-reformers, striking off the trammels of frivolity and false opinion, leave the mind free to embrace all which is truly noble and important; to live simply, and draw to itself all knowledge; not feel bound by necessity to seek only that which an immediate purpose requires?

I have done all I could to make room in my vessel — all undue love of dress, all indecisions, scruples, speculations about others, went overboard long ago. But the common claims of life, necessary cares, and the "Virtue next to Godliness," occupy so much room, that the better part of my cargo is quite straitened, and sometimes pushed out of sight. From all these evils and burdens, which I have thrown off one by one, I wish to keep my pupils free. I will do all I can to make innocence still the basis of their virtue; let me do my utmost, their own weakness and blindness will prepare enough of trials and discipline. You will say it is the delusive hope which inspires each generation. Be it so; but we fall short of our duty, if the consideration that we cannot cure all evil prevents our striving against that which is nearest.

They shall know evil, if you will allow me the Irishism, only as a thing unknown. I will keep far from them all evil in morals, all great mistakes in conduct, all wanderings and excesses of the feelings. This is all I shall do; I will not control, and tutor, and dictate, but keep away all that is harmful, supply ample nutriment to heart, intellect, and the organs, and let them unfold in their own lovely proportions. I do not expect, by doing so much for them, to obviate the necessity of self-education. I mean only to carry them as far as another can; and from this vantage-ground must begin self-education; which alone secures peace and strength.

Nor is self-education to be deferred until my work is done. One of the first demands I shall make upon them, will be to build themselves. The obligation they are under to their Creator to do this, will be the corner-stone of their characters; they can feel this as soon as they know that He has made and loves them; they will feel it more strong-

ly as they learn the wonders of His universe, of the world within, and of His moral government. They will be ashamed to fall short in so noble a universe; they will love to chime in with others; they will be grateful for their will left free, "not fast in fate;" and having once known the delight of acting in accordance with His laws, will value it beyond all others.

I shall aid them in educating themselves morally, by making them feel their faults and deficiencies; by keeping alive their sensibility, and directing it to these faults, making it the living and renewing power, and spring of action. But I shall make them feel that I can only point the way; that the decision rests with themselves; that by their own effort they stand or fall.

I shall throw them back on themselves, not only in their moral but in their intellectual education; while at the same time I shall aid them most abundantly, making always this provision, that I will do a vast deal for them, but they must do more for themselves.

But here you will say, I am giving you a proof of my ignorance of the world, by disposing thus summarily of another person's children; you think I shall find myself held down, as Gulliver was, by the myriad Lilliputian bands of conventionalism and petty difference. Well, we shall see. Mrs. O. is the most modest and yielding of women. Her aims are high, her taste refined, her confidence in me firm; she will coöperate and sympathize in all my plans, and I shall be well pleased to take counsel of her superior age and matronly experience.

The two elder girls, Mary and Sophia, are ten and twelve years of age; then there are two boys, now absent, and two little things of three and four, who fall also under my care.

Oh, how many questions I should ask, if I had you at my elbow; questions which I now revolve and discuss with my inexperienced self, wandering with careless eyes along this lovely river. You will think I am indeed absorbed, when I have written you four pages from the banks of the Connecticut, without one description or ecstacy. Yes, my dear Mary, places have lost their hold on me; persons carry me off blindfold; persons, and how to benefit them, form my present world.

I

I AM sure of a sympathetic listener in you, my dear Mary, so I will not wait for an answer to my last letter. This charming June weather has been devoted to making acquaintance with our new home; and now that we have ranged every hill and valley within ken, we are turning our eyes on each other, with somewhat of the interest shipmates feel at the beginning of a long voyage.

I have conversed much with Mrs. O., and she has detailed to me all her desires and views. Her health is, you know, delicate, and the entire charge of her children's education would be too heavy for her, and would take her off too much from other duties. She wished, therefore, to receive some person into her family, who would be as far as possible another self. She is not so unreasonable as to expect from this stranger the zeal and forbearance of a mother; but she expects certain qualities which fit her peculiarly to preside over some parts of the education. She cannot resign the sacred duty of forming their characters, of presiding over their sentiments and lesser morals; but she is willing to confide their intellectual education to other hands. Their religious and human feelings, their virtues, their lovely qualities, can be brought out only in social and home life, by the influences around them. Being unable to bear the whole burden, she has set apart their intellectual culture for my share; and though I shall seize, like herself, every opportunity to cultivate their feelings and their characters, my object is to be the unfolding of their intellects in a natural manner, the putting them in full possession of their intellectual strength, whatever it may be, and the supplying to them in each stage the nutriment most suitable and abundant.

Mrs. O. was surprised to find that I by no means gave supremacy to the intellect in my valuation of what was desirable in women. She began even to be alarmed lest I should not treat this secondary power with sufficient respect; but I assured her, not Cæsar less, but Rome more; if she would only wait and see my demands and estimates of what might be accomplished, she would see

that I served the intellect more devotedly, viewing it as the enlightener and guard of the feelings, than those do who give it the first place.

I am delighted to find our views so nearly alike. We do not absolutely differ on any subject, though there are some which appear to me extremely important, which she had never attended to; and some on which she laid great stress, I had thought rather to interfere with a free developement. For instance, she values very highly the influence of the slighter social duties performed from a high motive; because they often keep the heart open, are a discipline to selfishness, and preserve from morbidness and other evils. She values also polished manners, taste in dress, and sundry little conventionalisms, which I had always regarded as drawbacks to progress. She considers every conventionalism as arising from the general experience; freedom was found dangerous, and society, aware of its weakness or its liability to overlook, erected this conventionalism as a barricado and memento to itself. I agree with her as to the origin of these conventionalisms, and have no doubt that in each society are some persons to whom each barricado is necessary. But cannot such retire, each to the guarded ground he requires? Must the whole race be fenced in, and each one wear the fetters of all? Cannot each voluntarily observe those demanded by his situation and character?

She thinks it so necessary to the growth of generosity and an amiable disposition, that the social nature should be constantly exercised, that she is not willing her children should be educated alone. She said with great feeling, that the more we should do for them, the greater would be their peril; that the human heart could not receive too much devotion without closing and turning to stone; that even a mother's love may be fatal, when not counteracted by other influences. She meant, therefore, to select ten or twelve little girls from a neighboring village, and let them be schoolmates and friends of her children. So you see, my dear Mary, I have need of your instructions at once; for I imagine, in teaching, the difficulties increase in proportion to the scholars.

Mrs. O. has another reason for cultivating the social nature. She regards it as a haven of rest for woman. She has very sad feelings about the destiny of women — looks upon her daughters as destined to suffer — and whenever she sees any thing they can lay hold of to shelter themselves from the storms of life, wishes to cherish it and make the most of it. I approve of cultivating the social affections for a different reason. The germ of them exists, and we have no right to blight it. Natural religion tells us that each created being has its special claim upon us. The divine law says, love your brother — not love qualities merely, but your brother. The only difficulty is in fixing the limits of this claim; in deciding to how much of our time others not very near to us have a right. This question each mother must decide according to her circumstances and valuation for her children, and each child, as she begins to reflect, can ratify or reverse that decision. Mrs. O. has decided for her children. She knows that they would learn more, had they all my care; but she prefers that their studies should be shared with girls of their own age, and that part of the school-hours should be passed in learning to love their fellow-creatures.

But I have not yet made you acquainted with my little pupils. They are too lovely to be slighted: yet I shall say very little about them, for I have no penetration into character; I believe I am too credulous; I meditate, and analyze, and comprehend all that people tell me about themselves, but I never get at that part of them which is not manifested in decided action or revealed to me. Hence I never feel that I know the whole of any character. But perhaps with these simple natures I may get along better. I am very sympathetic, and never forget any thing I have observed in others; so as far as experience goes I shall understand them: but I dread meeting an incomprehensible one — for without understanding we cannot sympathize; without sympathy we can exert no living influence, but must take refuge in the dead weight of authority. I would have our intercourse all electric; one shall understand before the other speaks. A glance, a change of expression, shall be enough.

We will love each other so much, we shall need no speech. How can we help loving each other! I shall have ever before me their fresh young spirits, drinking in eternal truths. I shall see the color mounting to their brows, the eyes sparkling as a thought or emotion kindles them for the first time. First time! Oh mysterious charm! charm, belonging perhaps to our *finite* nature, yet so sweet that we shall resign it with regret. I am almost reconciled to the fleetingness of earth's blessings, because connected with it, is this delight of feeling, of knowing for the first time. With what sad and mysterious interest does one who has suffered much, watch the delight of youth in the intense life which each new object excites! They think that each fountain will be always in like degree a well-spring of delight. We know that never again are its waters sweet and life-giving as that once, but that the infinite seeker must lose his sense of disappointment by pressing on to other fountains, and then again in the distance memory may invest this with a new charm. Who can ever forget the delight with which his weak childish fancy revelled in descriptions of people and countries all unknown: or with what pain it rose to conceive of some law of the universe, and with what sober delight it held it fast when once comprehended! Let us recal the moments most deeply impressed upon us, which have ruled our whole life; the moment when we suddenly compassionated, loved, or admired; when through our love, or intellect, as in a momentary flash, we were aware of feelings, duties, existences all around us, unsuspected before; when we were lifted above our past world, and saw new regions before us, and a heavenly light to guide us therein. Then slight not the charm of the *first time* — it has a deeper meaning — it is proof, almost certain, that the swelling soul bursts her old limits, and by this token celebrates her triumph.

This pleasure, which I could in each case experience but once, I shall see and sympathize with again and again. And how I shall love to introduce them to each temple through the noblest vestibule! I shall make time, place, and mood, fitting; I shall keep off all trifling interruptions and associations, and introduce them to the wonders of cre-

ation with a fit solemnity. How ludicrous and how tiresome have I known the most important subjects and the finest authors to be to girls, merely because they had studied them in circumstances unworthy of them — defaced by absurd illustrations or their own wretched blunders. I will try to have all in keeping; if I am about to set forth the wondrous courses of the heavenly orbs, I will inspire a feeling of their vastness, of their unerring harmony, of the mighty wisdom which created and animates them. I shall myself be penetrated with my subject, and I shall not approach it as a mere lesson to be learned.

But I am running away from my little pupils. I will tell you all I have yet discovered about them, that you may shape your advice accordingly. Emily, the eldest, has an expression of great sensibility, and a fine and delicate intellect, imagination, and a most sympathetic and compassionate disposition. She has great vivacity, and I suspect a hastiness of character, which often leads her into error. She has a charm of manner very attractive to her companions, and a consciousness of it, which has slightly injured her simplicity.

Sophia has a very different manner and expression. Sober, dignified, complete, she seems to stand alone, and challenge neither admiration nor affection. Her brow and head would attract the phrenologist rather than the lover of beauty. Her complexion of sober brown disdains to borrow from dress or circumstance; no vivid beams dart from her eyes, no smiles or woman's witcheries dwell on her lips. She has not the sensibility of Emily, but perhaps quite as quick and nice perceptions, only, from dignity of character, not expressed. It is a very rich face, and the strongest feelings are there; but I do not love it at first sight, like the other.

The little girls, Cary and Lucy, are the pets of the family, and young even for their years. Cary seems a notable, brisk little person, one who will choose something above mediocrity in all she undertakes. Lucy seems tender, confiding, of more changeable spirits, and of a nature sometimes indolent and feeble, sometimes bursting forth in mighty undertakings. I infer this, because she wishes to do all

that Cary does; and as Cary is a remarkably smart, active little body, who keeps an eye on every thing, and takes her share whether in business or pleasure, little Lucy is sometimes left in the rear. She has daily proofs that she cannot do so much as her elder sister, but they seem all to be lost on her. A burst of tears follows each trial, but she does not learn from it to limit her undertakings: the next morning brings the same round of vehement desires, short-lived attempts, and bitter disappointments. It is shocking to see so many tears lavished on causes so unworthy; the child's sensibility will be wholly worn out, and a passionate violence take its place. I kiss away her tears, and tell her they are far too precious to be shed because her basket is not full of weeds so soon as Cary's, because her lilac chain will not keep its fragile round, because her hoop does not obey her feeble hand. I ask her how she will bear the certain troubles of life, such as losing her pretty chickens, sickness or accident, seeing her sisters and others suffer, being parted from her friends, if she sheds tears on such trifling occasions. Once I took the opportunity of her seeing a little ragged child, whose countenance bespoke its sufferings, even to the youngest eye, to speak of the child's condition and sufferings, of her ignorance, and the terrible fear that she might have no one to teach her to be good; and when she was very much touched, I said, "Let your tears flow for this, Lucy; this is a deeper grief than a fallen hoop or a task unperformed." I said no more. I saw she felt the difference between the tears of pure compassion and those mixed with vexation and shed for trifles. But her conduct was injuring her character in another way. To fall short once, ever so little, weakens the character, just as much as to strive and accomplish, in an instance ever so small, strengthens it. It is what no one must allow in herself who aims at being or doing much; for the next time more effort is required to reach the mark, and there is less probability of reaching it; another failure ensues, we become contented with half doing; we bring our aims down to what we can do easily, instead of stretching our capacities to the utmost; progress is at an end. Lucy is too young yet to perceive fully the evils of this; I show them to

her whenever I think she can perceive them; but for the most part I shall engage her in other pursuits, and by turning her sensibility to natural and safe objects, free it from this dangerous combination with pride and passion.

The feelings of childhood are almost our sole recollections of it. How sad it would be if all the feelings Lucy could recal, were those of passionate grief and disappointment. I fancy I must substitute habits with her in the place of old faults, without telling her the reason. I should fear exciting her if I touched upon the subject. I would rather let the changes occur as something springing from my arrangements, not made with special reference to her.

With Cary I shall pursue a different course. I shall explain every thing to her — tell her why such a course is best for her — make her a partner of my counsels, and having convinced her understanding, the change will soon follow. She surpasses Lucy so much in all common affairs, that I am anxious to find something in which Lucy excels her. I dread this constant superiority; none but the noblest souls can bear it. It is often felt by those who surpass in quantity rather than quality; because quantity is immediately perceived, but when we are surpassed in quality we have no conception of what is beyond us. Persons of energy and understanding are most liable to this fault; they know not the upper regions, and getting along remarkably well on this lower earth, they get a high sense of their own powers, and of course do not know themselves. I have introduced you to my pupils at home, dear Mary; in my next I shall give an account of the school. Be not sparing of your counsels, and do not think whether they hit the present mark or not. Of experience there can never be too much, and I am not so silly as to reject all knowledge not immediately required.

III.

My Dear Mary:

I have been a month in my school-room, and feel as if I had already the experience of years. I should have written to you at the end of the first week, but I knew you

would laugh at hearing me use the words "I always" and "I have" so freely. Now that I have presided there so long, I think I have some right to bring forward my modes and my experience — so here you have them, as you desire, from the beginning.

In the first place, let me tell you how favored I am in the room which Mr. O. has set apart for my use. It is the western wing of the house, large, airy, with windows opening on a lawn. No living creatures are in sight, no sounds, nor variety of objects, distract the attention. Wandering eyes behold only the dewy grass and the deep shade of the trees upon the lawn. Around us is the repose of nature, suggesting and inducing that repose of character, which I have often told you is to me the seal and sign of its highest perfection.

As we are far from the city and all public collections, Mr. O. has selected from his library such maps, casts, portraits and books as will aid me in imparting information; and every question which comes up is settled on the spot by reference to these, and by following it up until we are satisfied. It is scarcely necessary to say to you, that with the rod, I have discarded the ancient pretension to infallibility. I let my scholars see me as I am — a student in advance of them, more zealous and devoted, and knowing better where to seek what I need; but still a learner, aware of my own deficiencies, and not ashamed to acknowledge them. I must not omit the black-board which graces one side of my room, most pliant conveyer of all sorts of instruction to all sorts of minds, and even to the senses when the mind seems locked up. Directly in front of it I sit, and opposite me, each in her separate desk, my dozen pupils. I know you disapprove of these separate desks, as leading to selfishness and quarrels; but as my pupils are chiefly over ten, there is less danger of this, and some useful lessons may be learned, in keeping them neat and orderly, and arranging the books conveniently. There is a little germ of housewifery in every girl, which is pleased by convenient arrangements, and displeased by slatternly, incompetent ones; and this, school education should foster as far as possible. There is another more important feel-

ing in their little bosoms: even the youngest child loves to have a sanctum — a place to which she can retire and keep her treasures, and which no one can invade. Unless she has a place to keep her treasures, she feels that she has no property; if she does not by herself owning something get an idea of property, she will never understand or respect the rights of others. As a regard for the rights of others is so large a part of morality, ought we to neglect enforcing their rights in actual things? By enforcing them do we not make the child alive to their claims on our time, our services, our hearts? Believe me, we cannot even from the cradle enforce too rigidly the *meum* and the *tuum*. I have always been in the habit of insisting on them equally; and after a child perceives fully that a thing is his own, I say, "It is yours to keep or to give away — you have full power over it: how happy you are in owning something, and thus having a right to give! now you may enjoy the pleasure of true generosity." I have a contempt for that indiscriminate, unreflecting ease of disposition, which gives away all it lays its hands upon, whether its own or another's. The true and high, considerate, generosity exists only in persons who have a nice sense of rights, property, and feelings, their own as well as others; and a service from such, calls forth far deeper gratitude, than the same rendered by a thoughtless, lavish person.

There is one trait in my children which is very pleasing, and I cannot bear to check it, but I am afraid it will absorb too much of my time if allowed. I have told you that I cannot help knowing precisely what each one is doing and feeling; my eyes meet theirs constantly, and they are very much pleased with this sympathy, and express it in words. Each moment one or another looks up with full confidence of sympathy, and says: "I've been studying very hard, Miss ——; I guess I shall recite well," or communicates some other little item of the sort. It is right that these little facts should interest them, for of them is the tissue of their education woven; and I would not be ignorant of them, for it is only by these little facts that I can be sure to know the whole, and only by influencing them in these that I can influence them in the end. If I

enter into every little occurrence, I must exert in each a certain influence, and in a year, the amount and tenor of this influence will be very perceptible. Children can be taught only by line upon line, precept upon precept. I am so impressed with the vastness of the claim children have on us, that I sometimes feel as if the great object of each generation was to educate the next. Certainly only self-education has a higher claim. I love the confidingness and affection they show in communicating these trifles, and I cannot bear to check it. It is impossible to give them a hint; even the oldest girl in school often speaks aloud her satisfaction when she has finished a lesson, and expects a sympathetic smile.

I take so much interest in the workings of every human mind, that I always enter into them, and I have so open a nature that my feelings are immediately seen; and when we first came together these relations were naturally established between us. But now they have multiplied so fast, that unless they subside into a quiet trust and mutual understanding, I shall be quite overwhelmed. Do you remember I used to say that near-sighted and not very observing people had better manners, than those who were aware of another at the length of a street, or who could not enter a room without knowing every person in it. After being in a company ten minutes, I always felt as if I had conversed with every one there, and often forgot to recognize them when they came nearer. There is nearly the same difficulty in my mental perceptions. I know so instantly all that a girl feels, needs, or experiences, that I show it in my manner, regard it when the girl does not expect it, and when, perhaps, if unnoticed, it would clear itself or subside more kindly. I think these difficulties will pass away with the novelty of my situation, and when we all are earnestly engaged in study. Perhaps you can shorten their duration. Some one has said that the first pupils of a young teacher were as the blood of the martyrs, the seed of the future church. I trust I have had too much experience to bring on mine so untimely a fate; but I wish to cause them as little inconvenience as possible. I regret this partly from the daily inconvenience, and more because I fear they will

lean too much on me. Women depend enough on sympathy, naturally; far be it from me to encourage the feeling.

I had proposed to myself to throw the children on themselves in all other ways, and to enter fully into their feelings; and it is in this manner that I have brought on this habit — by showing them that I was interested in what they did and felt. I have always insisted on their making the exertion — on their conquering the difficulty, the indolence, the pettishness — and I have only sympathized in the success.

I was particularly afraid of letting them lean too much on me — of learning their lessons for them. I once heard a lady say, that she made one such mistake in the beginning of her teaching — it was so very easy to learn, and so very hard to persuade another to learn: and that she had destroyed the strength of her pupil's character.

IV.

Having, my dear Mary, made you at home in my school-room, let me describe to you what goes on there.

To each new scholar I give some account of my views. I tell her I wish the school to be a moral government, not one of authority; that the better they rule themselves, the less I shall be obliged to control them; that I hope they will do what is right and best, if not, it is my duty to compel them; that I hope they know the value of time, and feel responsible for the right use of it; but if not, that I am responsible to their parents, and cannot let them waste it: I represent authority as an iron enclosure, bristling with points, which they will never feel, if they do not stray beyond the boundaries of self-government. I have no punishments but depriving them of a favorite exercise or privilege. I have no rewards but more lessons. I allow them to speak to each other about their lessons, and to study together, if they do not disturb the recitations.

The children see what sincere and eager interest I take in study, and they imbibe it. Continually I explain to them all they can comprehend, and then say: "But you must know a great deal more before you can understand the rest:" and when a lesson in spelling is badly recited I recal the desire which they had felt to know such and such things, and tell them that study is the key which unlocks all the secrets of Nature.

How can any one think ambition or emulation necessary to make scholars? Is not the pleasure of the effort and the delight of knowledge enough to bear one over the greatest difficulties? I think it needs but to keep the end in sight: give them glimpses of the temple through the thick leaves, and they will not complain of the rough way. Every desire should be used as a motive to exertion, not suffered to expire fruitless. This is always an important part of training, and no less so to the intellectual than to the moral character. How many persons do we see, whose perceptions of what is right are lively, whose desires are apparently strong, but do not influence their actions. They have a separate and almost dreamy existence; much is felt and suffered in hours of meditation; and meanwhile the actual life keeps on as in another person, almost contradicting that part of the character. Some persons will say: we have no evidence that these sensibilities are so lively, these aspirations so strong; we judge by the deeds, nd had they been truly strong, they would have moulded and controlled the action. But I think this incongruity arises from a neglected education. Care was not taken early to preserve to the feelings their rightful influence, as motives; the child was allowed, perhaps encouraged, to act thoughtlessly, from a low view of a subject, without bringing to bear upon it the feelings awakened in other moments. Now, I think, the moments of intense perception and feeling are too precious to vanish without securing a lasting influence on the character. At these moments I would slightly touch on the changes they may work in us; and afterward, when the little feet were weary and the hill looked steep and unattractive, I would try to bring back that first enthusiasm. In this way unity of life is secured;

the highest emotions regulate and harmonize with the most common labors; the mind is at peace, and dwells in light.

My scholars have come to me from various teachers, and the modes have been as various as the masters. But I look in vain for one, who has been put in possession of her own faculties. They really think that education consists in going through certain books, and becoming familiar with a few studies. I suppose this chaotic state arises in part from their having been changed from school to school, and in part from the absence of any steady plan in the parents; and I have frequently thought of what I have heard you mention as desirable — the coöperation of teachers to form a system for the education of girls. If they would bring their experience, and tell us how much time they demand, and the parents would bring their desires and expectations, and tell us how much time they allow, for the intellectual education, we might have it well arranged and symmetrical, and as complete as the time given would admit. At present, all are working in the dark; the parents have no confidence in the master; the master is not sure of the coöperation of the parents. Not only these and the injured scholars suffer, but all unfortunate persons, who are within hearing; for no subject gives rise to such endless discussions as one imperfectly understood. If, in their blind struggles, both parties tumble into the presence of *Truth*, great is her light, and it prevails over both their errors.

Many words and anxieties have been expended on school education, which seems to be the best education for girls in our society; but they have been uttered in various corners, by mothers, whose instincts made them wise, — or partially and often dogmatically, and as complete systems, by teachers. When a teacher perceives the advantage of any one mode, as the Pestalozzian, or that of oral instruction, he is apt to be carried away by its success, and forget the advantages of a different course. Perhaps he has himself been for years subjected to drilling, and received the first instruction addressed to his understanding as light from heaven; — henceforth drilling, learning by rote, are banished from his system, and thoroughness and accuracy too

often follow. He forgets what he himself may owe to them, and hurries forth to free all little slaves, with the light which made him free. His system suits some children, and obtains the confidence of their parents; to others it speaks in vain. Meanwhile, in another little flock quite an opposite system, calling forth their energies in a different manner, works wonders. The parents of the successful ones are equally pleased. Parties are naturally formed; there is on both sides ample evidence of success and failure; the confidence of the parents is lost; the children are perplexed when they pass from one to another; and we have scholars admirably developed in some respects, but on the whole, crude, incomplete, unpolished.

I am not so Quixotic as to try to prevent human nature from running into extremes, and seizing partial views of any subject. But I think we ought not to rest in such views, and that a person who lives in society is inexcusable if he does not attempt to add his segment to others, until together they embrace the whole subject.

You who meet others interested in the cause, can, perhaps, induce them to join in the undertaking. They need not fear reducing the living food to "dry formulas and dead grammatical cinders:" nor the stripping of education to the bare branches and unsightly trunk. We would merely secure a firm and mighty trunk, clothed in the varying foliage which the differing nature of each teacher would furnish.

Far be it from me to rob life or teaching of their variety. I would only have the great ideas which should guide both fully unfolded and deeply engraved, so that we might safely follow the bent of our own individual characters in teaching, and draw to us fit pupils by the subtile laws of sympathy.

Come, my dear Mary, set about it, will you? I quite envy you for being near so many thinking persons, who will enter into the subject which occupies you, and impart their own experiences. I never regret absence from Boston but at these times, when my mind is full of a subject demanding not only reflection, but the light and observation of many minds. I want the stimulus of other minds seeking the same truths. I like to have a treasury of ma-

terials heaped together, from which each draws instinctively all which his nature prompts. The power of minds thus kindling one another is wonderful; it has given us eras in science, in poetry, in philosophy.

When alone I still find pleasure in holding fast to the practical, and sending my eyes roaming over distant regions for analogy and new light. I exercise two powers; enjoy a double life. I feel like a physician, who in swift thought ranges over the whole economy of the human frame to understand a disease, yet always keeps his hand on the pulse of the patient. Much as I reverence quickness of insight, I consider matter as the test in all which is done under the sun; and I distrust all conclusions, in which intellect, the feelings, and common sense, do not concur. And upon this subject we must have much more than the assent of these three in one mind; as so much depends upon experience, we want the experiments of many persons in all varieties of life. From these and their deductions, a general whole will be formed, which we can receive with confidence, and afterward adapt to our circumstances. If I have not stated this too formidably, will you engage in it? Pour upon me a flood of light from my beloved Boston. You know I can never abandon a subject until I have, by seeking and by revolving, gone as far in it as is then possible for me; and, indeed, never wholly abandon one: only intrust it to my memory as to our first mother's bosom, to lie there until new light from future events shall call it into activity. Meanwhile, rather than sit in darkness, I will light my little candle at the flame of my own thoughts.

I shall leave to those who have more practical knowledge, the inquiry into past systems, and without troubling myself to pull down any thing, shall consider the intellectual education of woman in general, and of girls in our society particularly; and to do this I shall assume the privilege of our countrymen, and go back to the very root and origin of the matter. Upon second thoughts, this is too important a question to be discussed at the end of a letter. I will rather finish my sheet by propounding some of the questions which have arisen this last month, and which your ac-

quaintance with both parents and masters may enable you to answer.

Do not you think that the parents' want of confidence is communicated to the pupils and chills the master? You know in our society cultivated and uncultivated women, mingle on an equal footing, a slight covering of grace and manner concealing from one another, and even from themselves, wherein they differ. The ignorant among these are perhaps quite as ambitious for their daughters as the well-informed, and having heard a certain study or practice recommended, insist on it, to the great injury of the pupil and teacher.

I have so much faith in the maternal feeling, that I have no doubt if pains were taken to ascertain the best studies for girls at each age, mothers would adopt them. After doing all in their power for a daughter, they are frequently disappointed; she leaves school wholly ignorant of some important branches, and regrets that no wise friend stood by to urge them; or she feels that her school hours have been wasted in accommodating to one change after another.

How are we to inspire parents with this confidence? There is in this country no authority, not even experience, to create it. We must deserve it. We must survey the whole ground, and lay it out with our best wisdom. We must gain insight into the subject, and consider the circumstances peculiar to our country; and we shall not then complain of want of confidence. If we are faithful, mothers will soon find it out; there is no want of seeking and reflecting and toiling on their part. Their wasted exertion is one of the most melancholy features of the present mode of education. How often have I seen a mother foregoing all social enjoyment, devoting her weary evenings to the grammar and the Latin lesson, wasting herself and her children in fruitless attempts to accomplish what they have never been trained to attain. I have been tempted to say, "It is too late,—habits of observation, of examining any little phenomenon, of persevering, of proceeding step by step—some such natural lessons given ten years since, and this would have been an intellectual sport. Begin early—

this is the great secret of all undertakings. Do not let children lead the life of vagabonds until they present themselves to the unfortunate master. No matter for teaching this or that branch; but teach them to observe, to reflect, to apply, to persevere; in short, to live earnestly, and according to intellectual laws; and they will be prepared for all we can set before them."

The absence of precedent may occasion us some slight inconveniences, but it leaves us more free to adapt our education to the position of our women. This is in some respects different from that of women in other countries. There is here perhaps more cultivation in proportion to property — and inferiority as to accomplishments — domestic life need not be so encumbered, though knowledge and skill in the essentials of housekeeping insure comfort, and may be indispensable. We are more companions for our husbands, have more liberty, more valuable influence, and are more strongly bound to fit ourselves for our responsible station. Do not smile at my running so glibly over the difference between ourselves and our sisters across the water. I but tell it as it was told to me. I make no pretensions to personal knowledge.

Considering the whole community, fashion receives but little honor. A certain degree of cultivation is highly valued. We have leisure to read much that is valuable in our own tongue, and those who desire it, usually find time for foreign authors. By observing a wise moderation in dress and company, we may fulfil all our social duties, and secure many hours for books. How desirable it is that we should be prepared to draw from these the greatest advantage! This preparation is demanded of the master. I had almost said, it is his exclusive province; for most parents are too busy to exert even a passive intellectual influence upon their children. The few moments they are together, scarcely suffice to call forth the common sentiments and affections of social life. And for the intellectual developement the master has but a few hours, taken from a crowded and almost gregarious life — from the dancing school, the streets, the thousand nothings, attractive because enjoyed in company.

How is the poor master to carry on this training in the few interrupted hours left for him, with children whose heads and hearts are running on far different things? I answer, he never can, until parents and children realize the importance of his work, and yield him full possession of the hours called his. Let him show them that the moral nature requires for its perfection, not only purity of heart, but clearness of intellect. Let them see that he knows how to develope the intellect; knows in what order and what connexion to present its appropriate food; that he will carry the most ordinary as far as their capacity permits, and will aid the gifted to valuable acquisitions. When teachers will unite and ascertain what are the most important studies, about what age they should be commenced, and in what order they must be followed, then we may hope to see our daughters well educated with half the present expense of time and temper; and the hours spent at school will be not merely the happy, careless days of youth, but the seed-time of an ample harvest.

V.

My Dear Mary:

When I consider human nature in its capabilities, or in these young creatures fresh from the hands of God, and dowried with gifts for eternity, my heart swells with enthusiasm. I feel as if it would be very easy to keep them from sin, from being sufferers, or the cause of suffering, to save their tender souls from the bondage of opinion and prejudice, and unfold them in their true proportions. All of noble and lofty that have ever lived throng my recollection. All the forms of virtue, lofty sentiments, sweet affections, press around and offer themselves, the fit birthright of these untrammelled souls. I allow their claims, I would embrace them all; but can they be united in one person?

Our ideal has been enlarging ever since the beginning of the world; each step of our intellectual and moral

progress has elevated our conceptions of it. Each great deed has made our trust in these conceptions, certainty; and inspired teachings have given it an elevation not otherwise attainable. Every age casts its skin of faults and errors, and moves on rejoicing like a strong man, bearing old burdens lightly, and eager for new; where it perceives a duty, delighted to fulfil it; where an enlightened conscience declares a practice wrong, quick to lay it aside.

Meanwhile the child comes into the world feeble and ignorant as ever; he brings no new powers to the wider and more complicated work before him. With the same temptations in himself, he stands before a more nice and strict tribunal. Yet he smiles as unconsciously, and applies himself to life with as good a heart, as if his eyes had opened in Nature's simplest nook. And he is right — for the same all-wise Parent has ordered his lot; and if a wider and more complicated field is before him, more light, more materials surround him, he need bring only the same powers and the same effort. Life is as easy to the child of to-day as to the firstlings of the world, if those around him, who have the light and the materials, are faithful to their task. Their responsibility is great — their difficulties of choosing, we must allow, greater than when life was more simple — but if they share the child's faith, and obey entirely every law that they perceive, they will not find themselves without a guide. This entire obedience to every law must be insisted on, because a being like man, in whom two elements are so intimately combined, and influence each other, can never disobey with impunity the slightest law of either nature. The artisan who has never fed his eyes on Nature's kindly green, nor raised them to the eternal stars, but strained them through a microscope until they are little more than one of its glasses, has neglected an organic law. Our sensations, when we have strained an organ by a certain use of it, direct us to repair the harm by employing it differently. Had the watch-maker snatched a few moments from his labor to tend plants, behold the largest objects in his reach, or had the evening been given to the free air and the distant heaven, his vision, and with it all his conceptions, would not have been circumscribed. The

importance of this obedience to organic laws has been so ably set forth, that I should not urge it, had I not daily proofs that they receive very little voluntary obedience. All should see their beauty and fitness, and love to act with them, and not wait until some evil or pain compels obedience. If the law be all-pervading and immutable, its evil consequences follow, we are harmed, whether we feel it or not. If violations of physical laws brought only physical penalties, we might generally trust to them their own correction, for they make themselves felt. But we have said that man's twofold nature makes the one liable for the faults of the other, and we should be especially on our guard, lest, in disobeying physical laws, we incur spiritual evil or privation.

Those who complain of the burden of civilized life, and look for their freedom to some great principle or reform, will often find themselves lightened by obeying physical laws: some slight clue, closely followed, brings them to unexpected and valuable results. Among these, two laws stand forth, more inexorable than the rest to the complaints of personality, but cherished guides to him who desires individuality. These are, organization and circumstances. By circumstances I do not mean that superior facility of one course over another, which presents itself to weak and sluggish minds as an insuperable fate; but I mean the environment in which each man is born, which inevitably colors his existence, but which never interferes with his free will or moral worth. I mean that which made the great of ancient times different from the hero of to-day — which made Plato and Socrates toil painfully for truths which are known to common minds now. It is useless to deny the influence of these environments. We should rather accept them, as the means of adapting us to our age and place, and believe them, though different in all other respects, equally adapted to unfold us for eternity.

The child feels no need of such guides. He makes no pause or choice who aims to conquer the world. He hopes soon to know all things — he believes he shall become all he admires. Blessed ordering of Providence, which hides from the young aspirant the plain strewed with the

fallen! let us reverence his faith, though our more experienced eyes are sensible of his illusion. Do not think I use the word illusion bitterly — it is by illusion that our finite nature is drawn on.

> "God gives us love. Something to love
> He lends us; but when love is grown
> To ripeness, that on which it throve
> Falls off, and love is left alone."

What are these illusions, if we examine them? Are they not the offspring and the expression of faith? Are they not spirit asserting its supremacy over matter, and trusting its own noble promptings rather than the sad tales and warnings of experience?

We have said that the child's hope is unbroken — is it so with the youth, or does disappointment wait on knowledge? He finds the world crowded with people, with ideas. If he would rank among, or even comprehend his contemporaries, an infinite number of powers and accomplishments are expected of him, which his happy ancestors knew not. Each day discovers some new department of which he is ashamed to be ignorant; each acquaintance has some new gift or art, in which he also would excel. He must learn all, practise all, feel all. He must become an epitome of the world, for his love of excellence will not let him rest. Happy for him, if in this distraction he lose not force and concentration; happy, too, if this immense undergrowth do not stint his loftier aspirations.

The youth alive to the merits of all, wishes to make all his own. He does not at first discriminate and seek only for the best; it is only when his pinions beat against this invisible cope of time, that he acknowledges that all are not for one, and asks himself which is best. Then is the dangerous moment for his faith. Among all these modes of activity, his mind does not rest on any as the best, nor can it affix to any a precise value. What is prized in one age or circle, is thought worth little in another, and he is in danger of casting it all aside as mere matter of opinion, and following his own wild will. In no one person can he satisfy himself, and an unexpressed but firm resolve lives in the depth of his soul, to be himself superior to all. Some

find perfect satisfaction in justice, uprightness, reasonableness; others live in an atmosphere of love, charity, hospitality; others make life brilliant by cultivation, refinement, intellectual gifts.

Among women, the different qualities are yet more varied; they show themselves, not in a few decided modes of action, but in an infinity of little traits; their feelings combine with all their perceptions and ideas; and the mental philosopher who would explain woman by the same laws which answered for man, is as much at a loss as the scientific man who expects by the simple laws of Physics to interpret the subtle combinations of Chemistry.

If the perplexed youth comes safe from the trial, his burning discontent with others becomes so much motive to excel. If he be really noble, he will continue to love others, though they do not satisfy him. Their wants will not excite a personal feeling towards them: he cannot estimate their powers, their temptations, but he can tell how far their deeds fall short of ideal perfection, and comparing them with this, he will keep its image ever lofty and pure; and from all his disappointments he will come out with a perfect love for others, an entire faith in man's capabilities, a conviction of his power over himself, and a determination so to live as to satisfy his ideal. But his ideal has already been limited by time; life is too short to be poet, philanthropist, philosopher, all in one; days and nights come round with fearful rapidity, and each one with its appointed little duty, to teach man order, and remind him he is mortal.

He soon receives another check. He has attempted something, which a companion apparently inferior did with ease, and he has failed. Why is it? He has spent on it hours, which, differently used, would have brought an ample harvest — he has tried faithfully, perseveringly. Why has he not succeeded? He has done his utmost in vain, and he gives himself up to despondency. Shall we leave him here, to waste his powers and lose his ardor? No — let us turn his disappointment into a valuable lesson. Let us show him that he has done his utmost of exertion in this particular instance, but has not used his utmost judgment

in choosing his object; he has not followed the leadings and laws of his organization. These laws are as inexorable as those of material nature; not one component part must fall short, not one proportion vary, or the result disappoints us. Therefore I continually say to my scholars, not exertion only, but *wise exertion.*

Let the young aspirant accept this second limit, and strive according to the laws of his organization; let his desires be as boundless, his efforts untiring, as before, but let them take their direction from the gifts Nature has bestowed; by watching her and following her leadings, he will discriminate the possible from the impossible, and take the first step towards being a wise and happy man. He who does this becomes truly humble; he knows that to no one is the whole kingdom of mental gifts granted, and a very small portion may fall to his share: such as it is, he is bound to improve it to the utmost. His happiness depends on it; only by doing this in the right spirit, can he enter into and enjoy the greatness of others. He must appreciate all that has been done, and yet be contented to forego great and little things, if organization and circumstances deny them. He must feel that not only shining deeds, the genius of Shakspeare and Beethoven, are out of his power, but that every, even the minutest trifle, that organization and circumstances deny, is equally so. He must live among this shining host, and do homage to them, yet perform his little circuit with a tranquil and contented heart. This is the greatest trial and the greatest triumph of man — to preserve his aspirations exalted, but his humility and obedience superior. He delights in putting his will into the path God has prepared, and finds in it a peace from all earthly vexations.

The more light a man has, the more he dwells upon spiritual things, the easier this renunciation of temporal superiority and power becomes. He realizes that in every action the motive and the consequence to the character are all, the concomitant circumstances nothing. He no longer strives to unite in himself all which he admires in others. He regards the shining deeds of the past as only the spray of the stream as it leaps into the abyss. If we try to catch

and form again the glittering bubbles, we shall fail. We should remember that in the still pool above lies the cause of this glorious show, in the green meadow below its most blessed effect; and if the living fountain and the laughing plain are his, he cares not whether more or fewer sunbeams lent lustre to his waterfall.

We come now to the third limit which awaits youth — that of circumstances. This is one which it often perceives first, and against which it rebels most, because this seems to be imposed by other persons, not by the will of God; for the young do not know, that when we have done our utmost to move others, and in vain, their fixedness is according to the will of God — it is something which he has brought about, through manifold influences, for wise ends. They resent circumstances imposed by others, not seeing, behind the narrow or base motive of the agent, the wise purpose of the First Cause.

The child is much to be pitied, who receives his constraint from the faults of others, and not from their wisdom and love. Perhaps no after influences can repair this early harm. The only way to make a child acquiesce in unhappy circumstances, is, in all our teachings and other influences, to try to inspire it with confidence in the wisdom and love of God — to show it these throughout creation in the situation of others — and point out to it elsewhere apparent evil as real good. If we can make the faith from these sources, overpower the continual fretting of its personal feelings, it will be safe; and even where we cannot, utter ruin is prevented, and good seed sown for future years.

VI.

My Dear Mary:

I surrounded the youth with limits in my last, let me now explore the sides where nature has left him free. He shows his faith in the justice, the wisdom, the lovingness of God,

by accepting his organization and circumstances, and believing that such as they are, they are precisely adapted to develope his individuality and secure his progress. He has no rebellious or repining thought because his gifts are slender or circumstances unkind; he knows that whatever *is*, is right, and instead of fighting against the barriers, uses them as guides. This is often done without a settled plan; we learn to do what we like to do, and can do best, but not always, and sometimes with self-reproach. This feeling arises from instances we have known of persons who, obeying one particular impulse of the organization, have in this way violated a higher law. Organization must not rule the vessel; it turns the helm, but there are sails, and winds above, and powers with which it does not vie. It is a guide of earthly origin, and only gives direction to the soul's activity in the body, offers more or less aid to the moral nature, through the intellect and feelings, but never controls. But the earthly life, by the proper acting of which the moral nature is developed, must have some direction — must move hither or thither in the universe — and this direction, organization and circumstances give. The soul in a new body and a new place, might find itself at a loss but for this officious adviser, whose counsels throng our life, from the cradle to the grave. At first she follows its suggestions implicitly; but as she has the power of comparing and reflecting on all the news it brings, and drawing thence ideas of duty, she soon finds that the promptings of organization sometimes disagree with these ideas. She ceases to trust it as a counsellor, and employs it as an assistant. She takes each matter into her own court — there lies the last appeal — there the soul, feeling her responsibility, calls before her all claimants, from those which ray their feeble influence from a distance, to her most dangerous and powerful neighbor, organization. The claims of God, of man, of her own organization, of the created universe, pass before her, and she tries to give to each its due influence. She can in a moment put down the greatest clamor of organization; she can break the iron bonds of circumstance; she can by her efforts set time at nought; she shows us that she can, one after

another, put down every combatant. I would pursue this subject no further, had not the power of circumstances over the will, and of organization shewn in family traits and phrenology, been a stumbling block to many. If it will not be going too deep into philosophy, let us stop and see what power they are likely to exert upon the soul.

We believe that the two objects of the Creator were happiness, and progress (which is the gratification of a finite intellect) — because the two elements of his nature discernible by us are love and wisdom, and because throughout the creation we perceive this incessant growth and change accompanied by, and causing enjoyment. We do not know whether happiness and growth or action are dispensed equally to each of the existences; apparently dumb nature has more action and less enjoyment, — or perhaps none, if it be unconscious; the animals seem to have more happiness than progress, they enjoy more than they accomplish; and man enters with an infinite enjoyment into all the pleasures which his earthly home supplies.

Throughout creation, then, reign happiness and progress; all are living, developing, enjoying — there is no stepping backward — no annihilation — we are never pained by seeing one particle of this matter, with which we have so much in common, annihilated; all that seemed like it, advancing science shows to be its change into more subtle elements and new forms. So strong is our faith in the indestructibility of matter, that should an instance of its disappearance be forced upon us, we should blame our limited senses, and trust to future discoveries to confirm our belief.

While we have this faith in the indestructibility of matter, can we admit for a moment that spirit can be destroyed? If it continue to exist, it must make progress or it will not be happy. Progress is synonymous with spiritual life. In breathing into man the breath of life, God gave him also of His life —gave him this impulse to progress, to live, this power of receiving impressions, of loving, and willing, which we call the soul. In our souls, then, we find the same conditions we observed in the rest of the universe; but we voluntarily obey these laws, which nature follows without a choice. Apparently, all that is required of unconscious nature is,

to move and interact in such a way that the greatest possible quantity of pleasure and service for men and animals shall be produced. Each atom of nature exerts at each moment many influences, in modes infinitely varied. Hence it charms us, and provokes us to search her out, and excites in us a corresponding variety of emotions. This is all nature can do; but as our powers are greater, so is our responsibility.

The world without souls would not contain enough enjoyment to satisfy a benevolent God. So He has planted in it souls, which are, like all other existences, not stationary, not defined, but rather powers capable of receiving and returning impressions. He put them in this growing, moving world, where each object forces them to live. He joined them to bodies, that they might sympathize with animal life and communicate with actual existences. He made those bodies subject to the same laws as nature, that they might love her and be interested in her operations. By thus mingling them with what was around them, He secured their being vividly impressed, and gave to life a mighty though invisible charm. Few people are aware of the enjoyment we have from being of the like nature with our abode, and its dumb dwellers. All the common joys which make earth pleasant — which keep man from being a misanthrope, an ennuyé, a suicide — draw their strength from this like nature. Love of external nature, part of our interest in our race, of our love of children, and the pleasure we take in the confiding gaze of animals, originate here. We cannot tell why nature soothes us, life draws us, and we call our feelings instinctive.

VII.

My Dear Mary:

There is a danger of our country, of our age, which we ought to guard against. In a life so full of excitement, the great ideas and interests are in danger — they are jostled

out, like the finest authors, by the shallow writers of a day. In educating a child now, it would be my chief aim to give it depth of character; it should be not merely intellectually acquainted with the history of the creation, and of God's dealings with the children of men, but it should have a vivid and realizing sense of God's wisdom, love, and continual presence. Often a child is impressed with this for a moment, then comes some minor fact or thought, and it passes from its mind. The great facts of God's existence and character, and our responsibility to Him, should have such hold that no other thoughts can displace them; they should occupy in our minds the same space they do in reality—that is, should consciously penetrate our whole existence. Only by doing this we satisfy their claims upon us; not by barren assent or momentary feeling. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart — He will accept no less. Now, how in this bustling, crowded world, can we save children from this distraction, and secure to them depth of sentiment and strength of principle? The first requisite is, that we be thus penetrated ourselves. If God *is* to us the supreme and ever-present Being he should be — if our desires, tastes and occupations, receive their limits from the moral sense — it will be shown in our daily life, and most children will imbibe it. The next requisite is, that we be open with them; that we do not set apart ideas as above their comprehension, nor keep from them the motives of our conduct. Let them sympathize with and enter into all we do; let us show them that we practise the same submission to law which we ask; let them see how our actions spring from feeling and truth, and they will regard these as real moving powers, not as dry precepts. Let us trust them, and call upon them for sympathy in all we do and feel. For them, nothing is too holy; they have all the powers that we have, and those powers are fitted to comprehend the natural manifestations of moral truth. They may not always fully comprehend the action, but they will see it in their own way, and perhaps with a purer spirit than an older person; for Divine lips have declared, that of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Another truth which they can early feel and keep pres-

ent to their thoughts, is, that all which is done under the sun, is the small index of a mighty power — that the spirit uses this rude web of life only for support, while unfolding and nerving itself for greater flights. But this rude web is its appointed work for the season. We must not be depressed because it looks common and unworthy, nor for this must it be despised and abandoned; it often gives the clue when spiritual insights are silent; and when we consider that infinite spiritual powers descend into it, toil and grow in it — when we reflect that this labor, this mortal life, is the way which the Creator has prepared for this unfolding, we become reconciled to it; and we wish to have it perfect in every part — so many strong threads of the intellect, so much soft enfolding of the feelings secured by steady and vigorous action. We cannot hasten the task, nor do it piecemeal, nor pause in it. We must lay in thread after thread, often ordinary, sometimes sad ones, — but to the placing of each many influences combine, and from each mighty results follow; and according as each is wrought with fidelity, comes the spirit at last out of its mortal coil, strong and glorious, or feeble, tarnished, fallen from its first estate.

This view of life is constantly present to me, and it gives me great consolation and patience in all my undertakings. I have often need of it in school, so little is accomplished, compared to my wishes; yet I know that if we are all faithful in all things, our characters will rise to the utmost. I strive simply to obtain fidelity from moment to moment, and am not impatient for actual results — casting myself on that spiritual law which decrees strength as the reward of exertion.

I believe I have now mentioned the most important ideas which should be kept present to a child's mind. All others will fall into their right place. Levity, excess, inconsistency, will vanish; we may direct the activity wherever organization promises enjoyment and excellence.

I must now consider how far organization guides us in the education of girls. Its first indication is one in which all experience, and I should say each person's consciousness, agree — to cultivate the feelings rather than the intellect.

Were the powers of man and woman precisely *alike*, it would be an anomaly in nature. The difference is one of the wisest provisions of the Allwise, and must be kept in sight in all attempts to unfold woman in her true proportions. We observe at once that all beings claim her love, that her heart is always ready to answer the demands on her intellect. Whatever she sees, knows, touches, she loves. Her love is not only more universal, than that of man, but more fervent, particularly her religious feeling. Let us follow the leadings of nature, and call forth and strengthen feeling in all its forms. She must cherish at the bottom of her heart, deep central fires, making the surface luxuriant. She must have sensibility, hearty sympathy with all human feelings, swift compassion for the afflicted, a heart wide enough to embrace the world, yet delighting to overflow the few with its treasures. When we recal the many occasions on which feeling makes woman seem to us almost divine, we feel that her intellectual developement is far less important. In these hours she beams upon man, far, far above him; but how often, how constantly, does she fall below him! How often is her sweetness turned to gall! She sheds poison where she would pour balm; trifles appear to her mountains, and the mightiest interests take no hold on her light and fickle nature; she cannot understand nor express herself; she moves as in a dream, scattering her precious gifts with sealed eyes. Feeling alone cannot secure her happiness — it may make her wretched — and we turn to the enlightening and saving power of the intellect. We would cultivate it for those who are beloved, because it increases, a thousand fold, their delight in loving, — we would cultivate it for the lonely, because it is a safe resource.

We may infer that the developement of the feelings is of more importance than intellectual culture, because God has not left it to chance or choice. Women, particularly, he surrounds from infancy with all that can excite feeling. They are the cherished objects; they live in the very heart of life — in the scene where all great events occur, where great griefs are borne, and where all outward action has its rise. Birth, death, sickness, all wounded feelings, seek

shelter in home, and through sympathy develope the hearts of wives and daughters. The play of social life, the sweet intercourse of families, the helplessness of infancy and of age, the sufferings of others, all excite and deepen feeling. The daily life of woman derives its interest from the hold which persons have on her feelings; that she may please them, she cultivates the graces and embellishments of life — she seeks all womanly gifts — her charmed hands would smooth the pillow, her sweet discourse drive care from the knotted brow; at her approach the little child should cease its wailing. Happy the woman who finds in her own family sufficient objects for such cares, — who knows the delight of blessing, and seeks books only to return, laden with spoils, to well-attuned hearts. But we cannot anticipate such a lot for all children, and it is the part of wisdom to prepare for the most lonely and dreary one.

We have said that in the love with which all regard infants, and in the teachings of life, God has provided for the developement of the feelings, so that we need only guard against their being stifled. But the intellectual culture has not been thus universally cared for. The wants of daily life, and surrounding objects, solicit the intellect, but by no means so powerfully as the relations with others excite the feelings. Now there is a period, before all these relations are formed, before the feelings take possession of the soul, and before daily occupations press, in which there is leisure for intellectual culture. There is at this time great activity, both of mind and body, and we should take advantage of it to give to each the culture which her situation, that is, her leisure opportunities and society require. If this period escapes, the activity will dwindle; new ties and feelings will take possession of her, and it will be only too late that she will discover her neglect.

If we allow to woman in general less extended cultivation of the intellect than of the feelings, there are many circumstances which limit it still more. In no rank, from the queen to the savage, can woman be too gentle, too loving, too devoted; but there are many situations in this wide range in which she may devote so much time to her

intellect as to crush and wither her more lovely traits. Thus the time allowed for the intellect, varies much more than that claimed by the feelings. It is more an affair of judgment, to be decided according to the other demands on her time. Let us take a woman in our society, see what degree of cultivation is attainable, ascertain what are the other claims upon her time, and then we shall know how large a portion of a child's hours shall be given to strictly intellectual culture.

Filial, parental and family claims occupy generally a large portion of the time. And though we may sometimes think that as much affection might be maintained, and that the parties by more cultivation would become more worthy of love, still in acting out the golden rule, we must do, not what with our wants and tastes we in his place should wish our neighbor to do unto us, but what he, with his wants and tastes, wishes us to do unto him.

Do not imagine that in making this marked division I forget that the intellect and the feelings are often and best cultivated together, and must never, even in school, be wholly separated; far less would I put their claims in opposition. When we enter on infinite life, there will be no competition, — the soul can be all love, all wisdom, all action, — but while we are finite, this inexorable time marks out life as a portion to be divided. Before the night comes, is time for so many thoughts, but if the soul is given up to them, feeling languishes; — or is the day passed in little deeds flowing from feeling, perhaps the mind has not enlarged its limits. Many lives are passed in kind and humble offices, and we love those who lead such, and regret that in later life they have not always the happiness they seem to merit, because their minds have become contracted and barren. Other lives are passed in self-culture, and we receive from those who lead such, exquisite enjoyment, but they often disappoint us at home. Life seems too short to bring both thought and feeling to perfection, as few plants can produce both abundant leaves and flowers. Do not blame me, that I seem to make a choice between them — it is the tyrant *time* who forbids the fullness of both.

You know that I was half a convert to that writer on memory, who thought it could only be cultivated through the affections. A French writer has well expressed the same truth, by saying, that "sentiments have in our souls a continued existence, ideas only pass through them, and we cannot retain these fugitive ideas unless the sentiment with which they are inwoven has given to them life." The feelings certainly are a most powerful stimulant to the memory, yet the use of them as a means of strengthening the memory, is liable to many objections. Are not the instruments more worthy than the object? Shall we bring down the divine affections, and bind them to the chariot of an unwilling intellect? — will they not themselves bear it along to high and heavenly wisdom, and do not we risk the loss of this when we yoke them to the service of mere knowledge? Beside, is it feasible?

> 'We can call spirits from the vasty deep,—
> But will they come, when we do call for them?'

Will love flow where there is nothing to call it forth? or are we to make a dearth round the heart, and then offering subjects, trust to that strong need of loving which has made the spider and the picciola dear to the prisoner? or are we to gild them with a borrowed hue, and say 'Love this, learn this, for my sake' Is the mighty influence of a mother, a friend, to stoop to such petty ends? — No, never will I drag high and strong motive from its appropriate sphere: by the right action of the intellect and of the feelings, the moral sense is evolved. They are its ministers — but if one servant wait upon another, the master goes unserved. The feelings are the oil of the moral life, — if we burn it for the intellect, the moral sense goes benighted.

I would show to young persons the worth and the pleasure of intellectual culture. I would tell them that thus can they best use their intellectual gifts; but if they prefer to serve God in some other department, they can do so; if they use their hours well, they can be good and happy without much intellectual culture; but if they will once make the effort and acquire it, they will find it genial, as morning to the darkened earth.

But I would make no appeal to the child's feeling for me; that should be reserved for desperate cases. The mother, who calls out her child's strongest feelings for a merely intellectual stimulant, lessens her power over him in a moral crisis; and by accustoming him to yield to personal influence, instead of immutable ideas and the real worth of objects, she subjects him to an influence which may be his ruin. Ideas, ever the same, hold out the only shelter to dim-sighted, erring humanity; whoso does not often visit their cell and strengthen himself by their saintly teachings, will find affections, influence of friends, favoring circumstances, all insufficient for him. Do you know that one of the greatest alarms I had in beginning my school, was from a friend who said to me — "You will have no difficulty in teaching them; with such little ones, personal influence is the only motive; they will love you, and will wish to please you, and will learn." I was aghast. In my pictures of a school, I had never thought of myself as having any personal existence. I was to present the objects vast and interesting as they really are, and if I made the air clear they would draw my little mariners, as the enchanted mountain did Sinbad's vessel. I pondered much on this remark of my friend, and rummaged over all my recollections to see if I had ever learned any thing for any body's sake; and at last resolved to adhere to my own plan until it failed; to make my pupils learn for the beauty of learning, and because their corresponding faculties yearned for it, and to keep my personal influence, if I had any, to soften their hearts and manners, and ennoble their sentiments.

A short experience made my friend's meaning clear to me: he meant my constant, unconscious influence. Knowledge and the children were to be brought together, and I was the interpreter; even if knowledge attracted them, they needed most minute guidance on the way. I must sympathize with each emotion, know each occurrence, exert constant control; in short, be all eyes, all heart, all brain; in the manner of doing this, consisted my influence. At first this seemed so great that I shrank from it; these blushing, smiling children, changing countenances and changing opinion at each word or glance of mine, seemed wholly in my power, and I feared the responsibility.

My fear of its becoming excessive, was quickly dispelled by certain deficiencies and sluggishness, which called for whatever accumulated influence I might possess. Indeed I have often rained down all influences in vain. I concluded, therefore, that these things would adjust themselves; and dismissing all self-consciousness, set my task before me, and perform it in all simplicity. I offer them all which can draw out and enrich their powers; encourage the faint-hearted to daring beyond their hopes, and urge the strong ones to their utmost speed. I love to shine into the midst of their perplexities, and see their brows relaxing, and the accents of despair changed for new ardor. I love to enter into the troubles and success of the feeble ones, and to make them feel that one of my little dependants is as precious to me as another. But I should never cease, if I were to tell you all my enjoyments. You know them all — you must feel them still — for though novelty on your side is worn off, it must revive partly from sympathy with each new claimant.

When I present to them a new idea, my pleasure is two-fold; I enter into their feelings, and I find a new worth in the idea. What sight can be more interesting than that of these fresh beings receiving a great idea! We are witnesses of a stupendous mental spectacle. This mind, so wondrously formed for emotions of delight and admiration, placed in a universe fitted to excite them, experiences them for the first time! What, except feeling it ourselves, can be more exquisite than this heaven-prepared meeting! You would not let a friend go to Niagara, or to the shores of the ocean, for the first time, alone, lest you should lose his transports; and can we behold with indifference these emotions, often overpowering to children, when truth breaks upon them in a new light — when the wonders of Nature, or the enthusiasm of such a man as Columbus is presented to them? Children have many such excited and breathless moments. Their transparent faces, their eager looks and exclamations, their insatiable demand for more, show how critical are such moments: their whole being is fused, and you may mould it as you will. How sweet it is then to fix and deepen this feeling, by mingling with it adora-

tion — by saying: "God, the wise, the loving, has done this; he poises this mighty universe; he makes this moral law so beautiful to you; he inspires the heart of men with noble desires, and guides them hither and thither, each to his own work." How can any one say the world is wilful, and earth-inclined, and must have its way, while we have these wondrous existences around us, — this ever-renewed inward life, — and these fresh young beings springing beside us! Our mission is to bring them together; by the sublime spectacle of Nature and the profound teachings of Life to develope these new beings; to set their faces the right way in their tender years, and God through his works will draw them to Himself.

Borne on by our sympathy, we shall forget our pitiful individual existence in this manifold one; we shall know only that we are doing our part in that for which the human race is born. Do not suppose from my writing thus, that I expect each day to bring forth these great truths. I know that it is only through patient gropings, or through a rare flash of the feelings, they come to any one. But each day may prepare for them, and may grave them on the character. Each has also a harvest of less important but interesting knowledge. I have my share of troubles and fatigue; mine may, in one sense, be called a day of small things; for the hours are filled with influences, each of which seems slight, but all which form life and character. When a difficulty is vanquished, or ill-humor overcome by steady, gentle treatment, I consider the learning or doing the thing required the smallest part of the lesson. Forbearance, perseverance, kindness, have been practically recommended, not only to the individual, but to all the school; and the seed thus scattered, flies away and takes root where we least expect it, and without that dash of bitterness personal experience sometimes produces. This is one advantage in a school; the lessons are given more in the abstract; the individual has no proud or angry feeling; she perceives that industry is always and every where better than idleness, that kindness is loved by all, and she chooses them herself, without feeling that she has been conquered or blamed. When any thing has been done amiss, I al-

ways make the blame as little personal as possible ; I say, that was an imperfect recitation, I hope I shall not have such another. If any thing unkind has been done, I am still more careful. I dread blunting the sensibility. If I am obliged to speak of it before the others, I mention it as a thing to be deplored. In short, I put every fault in its true light, and let their own consciences whisper the reproach. I am equally particular to let them see the punishment as one of the effects of ill conduct, not as inflicted by me, except in slight cases, when it is rather a remembrancer. I always impress on them, that the effect of faults and bad habits on themselves is more hurtful than the outward evils they call punishments. I try to make them enter into all my doings, into my justice and firmness, and see how I dread swerving from them. I consult them, ask their testimony, and show them how eager I am to learn the merits of each case, and how willing to yield my impressions to contrary evidence. Thus they find that the law is above all — even above the one who rules them — and do not run the risk of having their moral sense blunted by an unacknowledged mistake, or exertion of arbitrary power.

VIII.

My Dear Mary :

I was so carried away in my last, as quite to lose sight of the point I was about to consider ; I mean the proportion of time to be devoted to strictly intellectual culture.

We have restricted the intellect in comparing its claims with those of the feelings ; but if we have narrowed its territory, we must insist that it shall possess it fully. If the hours are few, let them be hours of vigorous exertion ; let the scholars go, not merely as recipients, but as wrestlers, doubling their powers by wise exertion, making their minds robust, healthy, glowing, as the frame glows after great exertion. This intellectual pleasure is too sweet ever

to be foregone, when once known; and each child, however humble in capacity, may taste it: for it is the feeling of doing our utmost which bestows it; and though not so intense to the pigmy as to the giant, it is to both far removed from lassitude and inaction. I would urge this point very strongly; let the school hours be hours of training, severe training. Do not aim at teaching much of this or that, but offer what you think will excite and expand most, and secure this constant growth. Make the sword keen and strong, and it will cut all the knots fate offers: then the youth comes from school lightly clad, tightening his girdle, fit for warfare and for burdens, containing in himself that which will make him conquer the world; but if he be cumbered with learning, like the Persian with gorgeous armor and baggage, he sinks before the first obstacle.

The woman, and the perfecting of her powers, are the first thing, and knowledge is valuable only as the means of doing this. Another reason for insisting that school hours shall be hours of severe study, is, that intellectual taste and culture are often given at home, or by lectures or books; and there is danger of the mind becoming enervated by this flood of easy learning, by always receiving and never striving. Receiving may give richness to the mind — it can never give strength. We are often disappointed in persons as they advance; their strength, their persistance, is not equal to their promise. Perhaps this is owing to the absence of early intellectual training. It is well known that severe exercise gives the frame a strength quite beyond common walking. There is the same difference in the force of a character which has striven, and one which has merely received. I have often thought of this as one of the compensations of life. One man is surrounded by every advantage; he is the mirror of those around him, and the mirror reflects all that is rare and high in life; he has no necessity for effort, gains no strength, and the slightest touch destroys him. Another has almost no advantages — nothing but warnings, wants, difficulties — but he is forced to strive, to live. I would carry the parallel between the frame and the character still further;

their dangers are the same. We seek strength for the physical nature in exertion; but we want not strength at the expense of delicacy. We would have each nerve, each organ developed, so as to give to the soul a true report, and the greatest amount of pleasure; but there must be nothing callous. Nor will we put out an eye to heighten the sensibility of the other organs. Just so in the soul: we want the greatest degree of firmness and power which is consistent with delicacy of perception and with the developement of the whole soul. We would not stifle imagination, that we might increase common sense, nor would we take a child from actual life that she might go further in ideas. On the contrary, we would secure her being so much alive to all as to appreciate all; and keeping always this balance, and trusting to the feelings to preserve delicacy, we would do our utmost to strengthen her intellect and character.

This is the part of the teacher; out of this wide universe she is to choose that which will most excite and enrich the intellect, and she must insist on intellectual exertion. She must give just as much light as is needed to induce exertion, yet never so much as to make effort needless. She must show the child at each step, that not only her coöperation, but her utmost exertion, is necessary, and that the teacher cannot make it for her, any more than she can take steps for a tottering infant. Just as the infant's little feet get strength and skill, so must the child's mind, by its own efforts; and as it is worth more to the child to know how to walk and have the freedom of the globe than to have perambulated the nursery and garden in leading strings, so it is more to the youth to come into full possession of its powers, with but a small patrimony of knowledge, than to be loaded with a vast amount, and know not how to use it or obtain more.

After all, what is the amount of any knowledge man acquires in his short life? On his death-bed, his powers, his capabilities, belong to him; the actual knowledge he will probably find almost an imperceptible unit, and of no account to a spirit clothed with immortality. Just so far as his intellect and feelings have elevated his moral being,

he will be happy and have insight; but if his intellect have been only collecting earthly pebbles, he will find it a drawback, not an aid. Therefore we must keep in view, that this knowledge, by which we tempt out and strengthen the intellect, is only its mortal food; created for the intellect, not itself the end of the intellect; only to be elaborated by it, and thus enlarge the life of the soul. This consideration will guide us in our choice of studies and objects to be presented. We shall not be solicitous that the intellect should be versed in history, thoroughly scientific, acquainted with art; but we shall think it entitled to know what man has felt and done, to enter into nature and art, and we shall offer these, feeling that they are inferior to it; not that they are mighty piles, and it must toil up them. We shall choose our studies far more freely, without regard to what is considered necessary or fashionable, except so far as it is not worth while to fight with the world we live in. We shall accept method, because it exists and suits us, and shall be, for the sake of the intellect itself, exact and thorough.

The choice of what to present first is a great responsibility, and numerous have been the attempts to prove the superiority of one or another mode. It has been attempted, also, to combine all modes. I should not wish to advance any plan, where so many wiser persons have failed; and I might yield, as most do, to the stream of circumstances, and teach what those around me teach, were I not convinced, that as each spot has its peculiar difficulty to be cleared up, just there falls the beam of light, if we will only receive it; if we will only keep in view great distant lights, and at the same moment use the little rays from surrounding circumstances. Some fail from gazing too fixedly on the great and distant orbs, others from feeling no influences but those of the nearest environment.

In practical cases, one of moderate insight may see better on the spot, than a person of the clearest vision at a distance; and it is in this position, that I now set myself about educating these children in that practicable manner, which shall most nearly satisfy my ideal. Circumstances I shall test

strictly, and let none pass as unconquerable, without conviction, and it is with great reluctance that I shall let them interfere with a free and complete developement.

I endeavor to fix definitely what is possible and what is impossible. I cannot enlarge the spirit which has taken form in each child; but I can develope it harmoniously, and give to its tendencies the highest aim. The moral worth is perhaps always in our power, however unpropitious o ganization and circumstances may be. It may exist equal and the same in all modifications of these; through the form and hue, which are incidental, we perceive the deliberate and faithful fulfilment of all claims, which in each case constitutes moral worth.

Thus, praise of character is more comprehensive than praise of natural parts and dispositions; it not only implies these, but proves them to have been well exerted. They have not shown themselves at intervals, or by the side of low inclinations, but have by action developed around themselves suitable habits, and waxed strong. The character is the silent but eloquent history of the past life. It is the complexion of the soul caused by the past and denoting the future; and, though Nature gives the first sketch and the materials, the character, and more especially the moral character, is the work of education.

We should feel our responsibility for this influence, and should labor unceasingly to make it the best; but we must recognize its frequent subordination to other and unforeseen influences. God holds in the hollow of his hand, and sends forth by unsearchable ways the resistless powers, which smite the heart with a sudden conviction, no human teachings could bring about. Habits, follies, prejudices, — the crust of years falls off in a moment. A lofty palace is builded on the very plain where we waited with our bricks and mortar, and could do nothing.

It is often when we do our utmost for another, that we become sensible how little we can do. We suffer, we entreat, we toil in vain, to root out the Upas-tree from our beloved garden; the black cloud, Heaven-directed, solitary sails over the cherished spot, the lightning flashes, the foul plague is gone.

Disappointment is the celestial messenger who draws us to another world; developement prepares us to receive her, and more especially fits us for this world. Only to a certain extent do Happiness and Virtue reproduce each other; the noblest growths require a deeper soil.

It was formerly a favorite theory with me, that children should in a manner go through the experience of the race; that the earliest poems, the earliest histories and ideas of life, should be first impressed on them. This seemed the natural order; that to make man what we have said he should be, an epitome of the ages. But, on examining the early writings, I found so many mistakes, so much that must be immediately unlearned, that I could not think of condemning a child to so much useless labor. I admired their freshness, their air of reality, the suitableness to uninformed faculties; but I thought, that in giving a child too many of them, I should deprive it of the advantages of the present era, and, perhaps, inflict the evils of the past. We must conform to time and space. Let us admire the past, and cull from it whatever advantages it may possess; but let us not seek to transport to it the child of the present century, or we shall make him that most wretched thing, a man misunderstood. Let us use for this age, the right it has over all the good and beautiful of the past. Doubtless it has its own disadvantages; and if so, we have no right to add to these, the evils of the past. Life is too short for unnecessary mistakes. We must try to hit the happy medium between presenting an object exactly as it strikes the unenlightened senses, and as it appears after being the subject of ages of experiments and philosophic inductions. If we present it in the former light, it will appear untrue to any child in the present enlightened atmosphere; if we present it too much in the abstract, as it delights the scientific man and philosopher, it will be to him dry, devoid of reality. As life is the happy union of spirit and matter, so every thing which interests the living man or child must address itself both to imagination and sense. All objects, all subjects exist thus; and he, who can seize and present them in this two-fold light, has the gift of teaching.

Did you never observe, in teaching children, how much more interesting facts become, when warmed by connexion with persons, or illuminated and their worth shown by a general law? And have you never been disappointed on presenting, in a short and favorite form, a high idea or a scientific truth, by finding it a mere skeleton to them, and that you must go back and show them how the facts seemed thus to the first inquirer, and how he perceived one law after another, and advanced to the inner one, which explained all the phenomena? You are often obliged to form again the whole circumstantial envelope, and this is a difficult task to those who have been all their lives reducing knowledge to its laws, and trying to carry it about in the smallest possible compass.

But it must be done by those who would satisfy children. They bring to these phenomena of mingled spirit and matter, a being capable of comprehending both, and illustrating one by the other, and neither must be neglected in high intellectual developement.

Will you allow me to illustrate this need of children, by a comparison more apt than elegant? Did you ever hear of the experiment tried upon two dogs, one of which was fed upon the richest broths, yet could not be kept alive; while the other, which had only the meat boiled to chip and water, throve very well? Though the nourishment was scanty, yet proper action of the powers was induced. Just so, were I compelled to give children pure sublimated ideas, or mere actual existences, I would choose the latter; but we shall all agree, that the child and the dog who have a due proportion of essence and substance will fare the best.

Constitution must be consulted also. There is much natural difference in children's impressibility by external objects, and, of course, in their relative impressibility by ideas. In this we must follow Nature, seeking at the same time to enlarge her limits; and must be content to climb the hill of knowledge by whatever ascent offers, trusting from the top to make all visible.

Teachers are in danger of giving too much importance to those studies, which most interest themselves. Children are so imitative and sympathetic, that they will proba-

bly imbibe the taste of the teacher, and this gives her undue influence. I should, therefore, be particularly on my guard against any favorite tastes of my own, and should praise and excite those in which I was deficient; thus casting my conscious influence into the scale, to counterbalance that which I unconsciously exercise. If we could not do this, if we could never excite what we have not ourselves, the sphere of excellence would be contracted in each generation. But as organization frequently denies to our pupils what we are most fitted to excite, so from our influence spring up new flowers and plants from sunnier lands; we give warmth and impulse, and the seed unfolds according to its nature.

IX.

My Dear Mary:

I considered, in my last, the influence of individual organization. I will now consider the state of the organization at each period of life.

In the child, we find immense physical and intellectual activity, extreme quickness of the senses, and susceptibility to impressions; a vivid conceptive faculty, and a flood of affection, bathing indiscriminately all which it approaches. We find a want of persistence in all its powers, bringing upon it often the reproach of volatility, but which is really the mode in which Nature accomplishes the vast work of these early years, without fatiguing any part. She makes the stimulus unceasing, but each organ ceases to work, as soon as it has done enough to strengthen itself.

In youth, all the powers become discriminating. Where they attach themselves, it is with a stronger grasp. But they lose, partly, their instinctive character, and are more guided by the apparent *worth* of things. Affection becomes feeling, and general activity is exchanged for enthusiasm for chosen pursuits, and in these there is generally no want of persistency. Still the powers have not reached their

full strength. They sometimes break down; and the feelings alternate from the wildest hope to blank depression.

In riper age alone, we possess our powers fully. Perception has a wider range, and we form more nice and quick judgments. We retain the impressibility of youth, and the impulses which we then obeyed blindly, we now rule and direct. We can employ each power longer than in more tender years, and need fear no burdens.

In childhood, then, Nature bids us afford ample exercise to the senses, as inlets to the intellectual and stimulants to the conceptive faculties; yet forbids us to exercise any long. She has placed the child here with as many organs as *we* have, amid the same objects *we* have, and thus signifies that it should at once become acquainted with each after its own fashion; should be drawn out by each, that it may not for one moment lose its symmetry; and should bury the imperfect knowledge it obtains in its bosom, to be the seed of a vigorous plant, whenever fostering circumstances bid it burst forth. If the knowledge on any subject be no more than that such an idea, such a person, such an object exists, it will yet be a fertile germ, and when the idea with all its details is again offered to the mind, it may be strongly grafted on the original impression; and the child will receive the new information with double delight, and will retain it longer. I think this mode of opening the mind gives great richness, secures a wide harvest field, and, as I have said before, prepares deeper and stronger shoots than can be obtained afterward. There is no danger of overloading, for I would communicate no more in number, only they should be well chosen; each leading to great results. There is less danger of volatility and superficialness, because the ideas, having more weight, will make more impression. There is no fear of confusing the mind, because each will be introduced singly, simply, and with its proper associations.

Perhaps I can make my meaning more clear, by showing you how I, being a governess and companion of my children, interest them in surrounding objects. Bear in mind, that all I expect to do, is to give them the advantage

of my experience. I have lived here longer than they have, and know more of this abode, and I tell them, all I have found out. But they have the same powers to comprehend this that I have, and the comprehension must be their work. I only draw their attention to it.

Behind Mr. O.'s house is a hemlock grove, a favorite retreat of ours. It is fragrant and shady; the fallen leaves give us a soft, noiseless floor, and the rippling water and the waving trees are a sweet accompaniment to play or study. The river bends gently round this little grove, and beyond is a strip of soft green meadow, the old bed of the stream. Here and there silent woods encroach on the brighter green, and then curve back, ashamed of their intrusion. A range of dark hills closes our amphitheatre, and across its canopy fleeting clouds chase, and darken it, as they do our beautiful basin between the Common and Brighton. The whole scene reminds me of that. So you may imagine me seated there one of your loveliest evenings, when the golden sky is mirrored in the golden wave, and the hills between shrink back, dark and frowning. Such an evening speaks to all. When my little ones have drunk in the beauty of the scene, and feel that longing which Nature always mingles with her repose, I say, "Will this last? Will the solid hills separate these fluids, or will all rush together presently in frightful confusion?" They are astonished, and cry out, that it will last; that it will be the same to-morrow, and to-morrow, and for ever. Then I ask them, why it should be so? how they are thus beautifully defined? thus forcibly held apart? Who first separated them, and out of chaos brought beauty and order? I tell them, that He who said, "Let there be light, and there was light," breathed into this chaos, this brute mass, tendencies which secured form, order, and life, and which, in their operation, we call natural laws.

I then make them observe these three substances, each by a natural law collected in itself, this solid earth, this fluid moving water, this more fluid, invisible air. I remark on the different beauty which each gives to the landscape, make them observe how much more beautiful they are in union than either would be alone, and with how much

more pleasure we rest upon them, knowing that each works according to the design of God, according to immutable laws, than if they were accidental phenomena, to be replaced in an instant by confusion.

Having thus presented one simple fact in Nature, that it is not one and uniform, but composed of differing elements, and existing and ordered by a First Cause, and having connected it with the beauty of the scene, I stop. Perhaps many questions about the formation of the globe, about solids, fluids, &c. will be asked; but all these I put off, with a promise to tell more if this lesson is well remembered.

You, who know my love of Nature, will realize that I can thus take her in pieces without destroying her, can even give her a deeper significance. You will see that I aim at this in all my teachings; to give to each object its widest significance, to connect it with many and high associations. This is the way to enlarge life and make it rich.

There is no danger in offering to the mind facts and laws ever so early and abundantly, if at the same time we excite for the manifestations of these laws, love and admiration. If these keep pace, how vast the whole sentiment becomes! Kepler, gazing at the starry heavens, and knowing its orbs and their mighty circuits, was capable of a higher transport than the ancients, who beheld them only as a studded plain spread over us, while Phœbus bathed his steeds in the Ocean.

There is no fear that imagination, reverence, or love of beauty will die from excess of knowledge. They will thrive by it; particularly, when knowledge is presented in its natural garb.

Last evening, the hemlock grove presented new attractions, and not only my little pupils from home, but most of those from the village, assembled there, eager for my explanations.

I told them there was one fact they must observe in this landscape. They beheld it all as one. It was, as I had shown them, composed of different bodies, and these bodies had each its own position, occupied its own space; and no

two could occupy the same space. Not one could exist and be evident, except as it occupies space. I made them hold their hands round their eyes, to form a sort of frame to the picture, and they perceived at once, that earth occupied a certain portion of it, water a certain portion, air the remainder. Then I bade them take away their hands, and behold the true extent of each object, and they would still see that every one of these occupied a position in space, and they could find nowhere an empty space, nor could get any definite idea of space, but as occupied by matter. They agreed that earth and water occupied their space, but some of them had always considered air as space, and could not be brought to recognise it as a substance. I was prepared for this difficulty, and had brought a thin India-rubber ball, not distended. I then made them observe, that our breath was invisible, and in fact air; and putting the ball to my lips, inflated it in their presence. They felt it, and I placed a stone gently upon it, and they saw that there must be some substance beside the India-rubber, which supported the stone. By its resistance, they were convinced that air was a substance. I also made them move their hands until they were sensible of the resistance of the air. I showed them how this existence in space was necessary to keep material things individual and orderly to prevent their mingling, and told them it was probably the first step from chaos. I explained how we got our idea of space; from seeing it occupied by one body, and finding that this must vacate it before another could fill it; and from finding the latter body sometimes fall short of, or exceed the space occupied by the first. This I illustrated by a little cove, which lay at our feet. It is difficult to judge of the size of a piece of water, and I asked them if they thought a boat, fastened just above, would go into the cove. They exclaimed, "No; the water was but a speck, it would not hold the *raft*." I drew the boat down and into the cove, and it rode quite at ease. I made them observe, that lengthwise the boat nearly touched the edge, and then said, "Can we bring in the raft also?" Those who did not believe the boat could come in, were now ready to believe

there was room for the raft, which was a tiny one belonging to the boys. We tried to draw it in, but even on the sides of the boat there was not sufficient space. We drew out the boat, and brought in the raft, and they saw that this, being smaller, left between itself and the bank a wider circle. Having thus given them an idea of absolute and relative space, I resisted all further inquiries until another day.

My examples are not always perfectly similar to the phenomena I am explaining, and I am always particular to note the difference. Children are pleased with comparison, and points of difference in objects generally similar are always remembered. A partial difference leaves room for the conceptive faculty, and makes them observe more accurately.

Last evening, with the same living examples before us, I taught them to view this mass of earth, this expanse of water and of sky, not as continuous substances, but as collections of atoms, held more or less closely together. I told them that all bodies consisted of atoms, existing more or less closely together in a certain space; that the intervening space must be filled, and we had reason to suppose that it was filled with heat or caloric. Therefore, when they thought of a solid, they must think of a body whose atoms are kept a little way asunder by the heat of our world; such as earth, iron, wood. When they thought of a liquid, they must consider it as a collection of atoms, kept very much farther apart by the heat of our world; so that they offer slight resistance to the hand; and when they thought of air, they must conceive the particles so subtile and so distant from each other, that we cannot perceive them. If we could condense air, and bring the particles eight hundred times nearer than they now are, we should have a fluid, with particles about as close as those of water. If we could cast out the caloric from water until its particles were nineteen times nearer than at present, we should have water as solid as gold. Again; could we, by casting out more caloric from the air already condensed, make it nineteen times more heavy, we should have air as solid as gold. But we cannot, on our globe, make such great changes in the density

of matter, so they might still regard them as solids and fluids.

I then asked, if they thought these bodies, so different, could exist in the same space, or whether the atoms, with their due separation of caloric, held each its own space? They thought the liquids and fluids might penetrate the solids, without making them occupy more space, and instanced a sponge; where much water apparently entered the sponge, without very much increasing its size. But I showed them that the water only entered by displacing an equal amount of air; and proved this by plunging a dry sponge into water, and letting them see the bubbles of air which rose to the surface. I showed them how liquids lurked in many solids, each atom still occupying the same space it held by itself.

Then I told them, that all around our globe was this soft subtile fluid air, ready to rush in at the slightest opening left by its stouter brethren. I told them, that in no place — in deep caves, leafy woods, cups of tiny flowers — was there a crevice so unattainable, that the thin air did not enter at the moment it was vacated by another body. It wraps us round, soothing, purifying, blessing us in a thousand ways; and always maintains its own space, though it easily changes place, at the command of others. They are so familiar with the power of air or wind, in filling sails, that they could easily credit its resisting power. But I would not trust to this, and the first rainy day, performed some chemical experiments, showing the universality of the principle.

They learned in this lesson that all bodies are composed of atoms, held at greater or less distances, generally by caloric, and that they are called solid, fluid, or aëriform, according as the common temperature of our globe holds them near, distant, or more distant, from each other.

They learned, also, that not one of these atoms can penetrate or encroach on the other; that the caloric which keeps them asunder, though invisible, maintains its rights; and that no two atoms can exist in the same space.

This is the way I sum up to them, what we have learned from each conversation. Though useful to them, it

must be tiresome to you. I will in future omit it; and, if you please, drop my character of Scheherazade, who was always an extremely provoking personage to me, and state my lessons in their regular course, but not so homoœpathically divided. Only bear in mind, that they are administered thus, for I have a dread of the Tarpeian mode of crushing the intellect.

Perhaps these narratives are not so interesting as the conversations themselves. You may prefer a sketch of my present arrangements — which you must remember are for girls from the age of four years to that of sixteen, none of whom have begun with me — and then I will describe my mode from the very beginning. This will be more orderly; so you must not complain if my next be full of nursery details.

X.

My Dear Mary:

Do you ever find an over-exactness among your scholars? I have one who perplexes me very much. It is absolutely essential, that a fact should be affirmed in the most unconditional manner, or she cannot rest in it. Now this is what I avoid. In establishing the laws of Nature, it is in conformity to truth to mention the majority of instances which prove the law first; and afterward, the exceptions. If you are speaking to one somewhat advanced and intelligent, and who knows that all laws have apparent deviations, you may tell her these and the cause, and she will comprehend all. But if you attempt this with a young child, it will be puzzled, and feel no confidence, and far less satisfaction.

To insure this satisfaction, which is one of the delights to which each step of knowledge is entitled, I state the laws in general terms, but not such as positively exclude deviations. But sometimes, in speaking of physics, when they have asked if it were always so, I have said, "Yes;

except when the laws of higher beings, such as vegetables and animals, come in with different powers, and take possession of these substances." But I have seen by their faces, that this disturbed them, and was not the way. It is not the way we have ourselves been treated. If we had not rested at each point of our progress in full faith, we should have been discouraged. Even now, some of the theories and laws most satisfactory to us, are erroneous conceptions of more simple laws, which we cannot at present reach; but for which our vision, by faith and experiment, is strengthening itself. Now this little scholar is not perfectly satisfied by my statement of laws, and teases me continually to make it absolute. For instance: if I say, "Water never runs up a hill, or ascends;" she says, "What, never? never? never in the whole world? Not one drop? not one tiny little drop?" and insists on an answer. She troubles me particularly about those laws, to which she must soon learn an exception in organized beings. For instance: beside the exceptions in physics to this law of liquids, she must soon know the circulation of the blood and of sap, and I am afraid her faith will be destroyed. Neither do I like to have her think that I have kept back part of the truth.

It happened, the other day, that one of my most punctual, industrious little pupils was late at school. On coming in, she whispered the cause to me. Afterward we had one of these objections raised. Grace did not wish to learn any thing as a law, that I could not assure her was always true. I said, "Do you remember that last week I praised Mary for her industrious use of time, and her punctuality? and you all agreed with me, and said she was never late? Now she was, to-day, nearly an hour later than the time. She left home early, impelled by her love of punctuality; but when she was nearly here, she met a little child crying, because it had lost its way. She pitied the little one, and knew that she could do more good by carrying it home, than by coming punctually to school. She has to-day failed in her usual regularity. Do you still believe in it? Is she punctual?" They all cried out, "Yes; she could not help it; she was orderly and kind, too." I said,

"Yes; she was punctual, except when a more important interest, (the child's happiness,) laid claim on her, and put in motion higher powers, (compassion and benevolence;) these suspended the action of the lower interests and powers. Thus your confidence in physical laws will be firm, though they be sometimes superseded by organic laws. God has ordered them all, and each has its worth.

Before I begin the details of my teaching, let me tell you how we pass the day. We rise early, and have no fixed employment for the first hours. We pass them chiefly in the garden and grounds. We tell each other the news of the place, and make arrangements for walks or rides. The children run off some of their exuberant spirits, and are ready to meet me in the school-room at nine. From nine o'clock until twelve, every thought is given to study by the older pupils. The little ones have half an hour's intermission. After twelve, we occupy an hour with music and drawing, and half an hour with calisthenics, which are my hobby, and shall be mentioned in due place. Then we have an hour's intermission. Two more hours are given to study, and half an hour to needle-work; making five hours of study, and two of lighter employment for the older pupils, and less for the younger.

I allow no frolicking, no delay, no wandering of the thoughts. Pens, pencils, water, all that can be wanted, are in their places, so that no time is lost in seeking. Seven hours are not too much for the intellect and accomplishments. You will think I allow a short time to needle-work; but most girls occupy their leisure in little tasteful employments, and half an hour's careful practice every day will give the power of sewing neatly. It is extremely important, that every woman should know how to use her needle skilfully and expeditiously, so that this family care need not be a burden; but that secured, I should not be in favor of her giving many hours to sewing, unless circumstances required it.

At five o'clock, the labors of the day are over. After dinner, we ride, walk, sit on the piazza, or do whatever we fancy. Our days are very much alike; we have no

stated holydays; but when fine weather, or inclination invites, we give up our studies and make long expeditions into the woods, such as you and I have known in former times.

Now, if you think that I require too much, you must recollect, that only seven hours of the twenty-four are devoted to both study and accomplishments. This allows ample time for sleep, common occupations, and amusements. It is during these hours, that the more important education is carried on; the religious, moral, and social nature is brought out, and the intellect also receives stimulus and developement. There are many opportunities in our walks, in conversation, and in reading aloud, of interesting my little companions in the sciences, and in history; and you may be sure that I do not neglect such. Thus my teaching is linked with home and future life, not regarded as a discipline, to be thrown off as soon as possible.

I begin with accomplishments quite as early as mental cultivation, that I may avail myself of the quickness of the youthful senses. Experienced teachers assure us, that all children are as capable of learning to sing and draw as of learning to read and write. This seems almost incredible in this country, where the eye is not called on to discriminate forms, nor the ear to discriminate sounds, until both have been occupied and confused by multitudes of sights and sounds not discriminated. At the age of five years, I give a short lesson daily on the piano; by a lesson at first of fifteen minutes, and afterwards of half an hour, my pupils make some proficiency in a year. Besides cultivating the ear for music, the eye is at this age quicker to learn the notes, and the fingers more pliant to play them; thus the mechanical difficulties are overcome, and they will read the notes as easily as letters, and their musical talent will be freely developed.

In the same manner, I put a pencil into their hands, and bid them imitate the objects around them. They were not very successful in this, and I thought they were disheartened by the want of resemblance; therefore I gave them easy pictures to copy.

You will be amused by the regularity with which their

occupations alternate. We need some rules, or we shall forget; forms, you know, have been likened to casks, needed to contain the wine; rules have a similar virtue. Beside, I only describe what my school has been for several months; when they are tired of any exercise, or are proficients in it, I shall omit it, until they can return to it with pleasure.

Do not suppose that I begin so many accomplishments and studies thus early from an undue desire to bring the children forward. I do it from a far-reaching economy; believing that moments now, while the organs are susceptible, are worth hours hereafter; and that we should not develope one sense more than another at an age when Nature has left them all equally open. By exercising all the inlets as equally as possible, physical and intellectual symmetry are preserved. This should be done at every period, but particularly in extreme youth.

Calisthenics I do not alternate; they are as needful one day as another. I am desirous to develope the children as fully in person as in mind; for by neglecting any one of our numerous muscles and organs, we bring on ourselves disease and feebleness. We are not aware of what beauty the human form is capable, until we behold some rare and fine specimen; we are not aware of its nervous power, until we see the feats of some Arab or trained athlete; then we ask ourselves, "Was this little, crooked, and faulty figure, which answers my purpose so ill, and often cumbers me, intended for such might and beauty? Why has it fallen short?" We answer, "Both strength and beauty depend in a measure on your training. Had you treated each part with proper regard and justice; developed, not only the muscles which civilized life requires, but all which you found there, strength, beauty, and cheerfulness would be yours. But you have directed your nervous energy to the most clamorous challengers, and left all minor claimants to starve, and dwindle away; that you live where your intellect is constantly excited, and that life is to be supported, is no excuse for your indiscretion. Look at that Bedouin Arab; admire the muscles which swell his arm, and behold your own, where they have found a grave; he has obeyed physical laws; given his frame

free developement; but you have confined and partially annihilated yours, and behold the long train of diseases that have followed. On woman, especially, this unnatural feebleness presses; it doubles all her burdens; robs her of her charm. It is my aim to free these young girls from all unnecessary trials. I have a book, in which minute exercises are laid down for exercising in turn every muscle; it also contains directions for walking well, a rare accomplishment. These exercises are not violent, but gentle; for the muscles are invigorated by being stretched, or by supporting a weight, more than by any sudden exertion; some are for the chest, and must materially strengthen it against our climate; others are for the carriage of the head, which gives such nobleness to the air; some are for the ankles, and these are the best foundation for dancing. Calisthenics are taught as introductory to dancing; but I would not lay them aside for dancing; they should be practised daily until the young person is grown up, and we should see healthy and elastic forms. I say nothing of our dances, though they are frequent both in hall and on the greensward; for it must be confessed, that though mirth and gayety wait on our entertainments, the Graces are not always present.

XI.

My Dear Mary:

You ask me for my specific methods. I will begin, then, by speaking of my plans with little children, with whose training I have had most practical experience. It is needless to expatiate on the vast amount of information which a child acquires in the first years of life, like a Chinese gardener, chiefly by an infinity of experiments, without much reflection. All it can touch, taste, examine, it becomes acquainted with. At the end of two years, its various experiences have excited not only sensations, but thought and emotions; the impression produced by one

object remains on the mind, and is compared with the impression made by another; remembrances of pleasure and pain excite emotions, of which the object is not present.

A new birth of feelings and ideas, in addition to those produced by external objects, arises from the power of recalling past impressions; and over these the soul's indirect control is complete; she cannot recal them at will; she cannot control the original impressions; deformity will produce pain; nobleness will excite admiration; but she can give herself up to the most important, and dwell in them; and thus secure their frequent reproduction with increased power. This mental law is as strict as the law of circumstance; we recognize it practically in many ways, as in habit, in the advice given to people to drive useless anxieties from the mind; but we do not regard it sufficiently in the education of children, or in self-education. To banish pride, malice, or meanness, is but a small part of the government of the thoughts; each thought, both in nature and importance, should be subject to a strict surveillance.

Above the low horizon of the Laplander's imagination, bounded by eternal snows, the idea of his mission rises no higher than the bare support of life. The Greek, passionately fond of his sunny skies and vine-clad hills, becomes a fountain of beauty; and places virtue in exalted patriotism. Each obeys external influences. He, who feels most deeply and dwells most intently on the wrongs of the slave or prisoner, becomes a Wilberforce or a Howard. He who deplores most the spiritual bondage of man, becomes a Luther. By a voluntary heightening of such impressions, these men secured their permanent influence on their hearts; and petty and selfish interests died out. Thus effect follows cause unfailingly; but the will can modify the cause. It is a power given to redeem us from the bondage of circumstance.

Now it is through these impressions, that we are to help to develope the soul; we may modify and influence the impressions by our expressed opinion, and thus suggest particular modes of acting; but we can never exercise

a direct influence on the soul. We may give direction to the developement, through the objects and circumstances with which we surround the child, and by our interpretation, we may modify first impressions, and leave new ones on the mind. Thus, if a child be timid, we may keep from it studiously all which can excite its fears, and present cheerful objects; or we may take it by the hand through dark places, talking unconcernedly all the while, and showing ourselves fearless; or we can take it near some great animal, and let it exhaust its fear and wonder, and then say, "How much mischief it might do, if inclined, but it is gentle as a lamb;" and even induce the child to touch it. With a child of little physical strength and excitable nerves, the preventive system is best; but I believe that those who can bear it, had better measure the danger at once.

Perhaps I should have spoken before of the necessity of children's feeling perfect confidence both in the love and justice of those who are around them; this is the germ of a higher faith, and is absolutely essential to educate them even for this world.

Were I to enumerate all which is required in a teacher, I might as well draw a perfect character at once; for teaching engages to all the virtues. But I am too conscious of my own inadequacy, to attempt it. The teacher should be one of those persons in whom the good and true appear agreeable. It is treason against virtue, to be good without being agreeable; that is, to think obedience to principle, in the great affairs of life, an excuse for neglecting the more delicate traits and minor charities; and when the faults of character are deficiencies, and therefore less appreciable, the evil influence on children, who cannot discriminate, is incalculable. A teacher must also possess tact; a quick eye for the right moment to impart knowledge, to praise and to chide. She should have the habit of observing physical circumstances. Physical laws are paramount with children; hunger, thirst, sleep, are on them irresistible claims: it is only when we have more to set against them, that we can ward them off for a time.

Not enough regard is paid to the physical peculiarities of children. A state of rapid growth and change must be a state of extreme irritability, and occasional feebleness; and this must never for a moment be disregarded, or the mind and character will suffer. Nothing contributes more to success with children than a nice perception of their state. Those are happy whom Nature has thus favored; others must seek it by becoming acquainted with mental and physical laws, by disinterestedness, and by endeavoring to enter into the feelings of others. We may imagine how much there is in choosing the right moment, if we observe a person who always chooses the wrong one, and represent to ourselves the influence on the child. The child is eager to examine certain tools, or to watch a glazier, and the mother calls it away to listen to a story. The child is unwilling to leave the window; she urges it, and perhaps renders it undecided between the two, which is a lasting injury; or she prevents its becoming practically acquainted with what interested it, and allows its curiosity to die away without the natural result of increased knowledge. I believe half the indecision and unreasonableness in the world is caused by such injudicious treatment; and therefore I dread to check or unsettle any thing. If the balance in matters of choice and expediency, inclines ever so little one way, I throw my weight into that scale, and bring forward all the arguments on that side. Little children need this confirmation and support. I state both sides fairly at first; but after a decision, I allow no regrets or looking back. They cannot unite all advantages, and they must put those which are unattainable out of their thoughts entirely.

A teacher who has this tact, will find many opportunities, even with children two or three years old, to direct the intellectual activity; and I must confine myself to this at present. There is more voluntary and conscious action upon the intellect than upon the feelings. The feelings are only to be kept alive in their first freshness. Perhaps we can never be more loving than children are, though our love may embrace a wider field, or be more concentrated; but we can actually think and know more.

We can put children into connexion with external things through all their senses. We can assist them to recal past occurrences; to imagine themselves in new scenes, and their playthings turned into chariots and horsemen. We can make them discriminate, trace cause and effect, and distinguish these from accidental sequence. Size and form may be taught by actual objects. Let them link each new fact to some old one, and give it its place in the mind; children's minds would never become so chaotic, if civilized society did not introduce many worthless things, and keep out of sight many that are valuable.

When their attention is directed to some fact, children will ask many questions which it is difficult to answer. They should not for the sake of making the subject appear more easy, be answered otherwise than with perfect accuracy. State the cause as simply as you can; and if they cannot understand, tell them they will, when they have learned more in other ways. Do not expect to satisfy them; leave something for the future; this is the condition of *our* knowledge. Let your language always be in accordance with fact, and not with vulgar errors. Always speak of the earth as a globe moving round the sun. Invest the sun with his proper dignity; do not let him be a larger candle. Speak of a month as the time in which the moon revolves round the earth; a year as the time the earth occupies in revolving round the sun. Speak of the simple way in which the earth makes it day and night for little children in different countries, by constantly offering its different sides to the sun; and then, at another time, speak of it as always rolling round the sun, and being inclined so that each country has its different seasons. All this will make their ideas more clear when they begin to study, and they will have none of those misconceptions which cling in spite of conviction. You may think this too much for a child four years old; but if you observe, you will find all children have some ideas about these luminaries, and are very inquisitive about size, shape and distance. The moment any thing becomes an object of perception, some notion of its nature, size, &c., is attached to it; and it is desirable that these first notions should aid instead of impeding the mind. If false concep-

tions become fixed, the mind will not easily part with them, and perhaps will be led to doubt other things which are true. The faculties are brought out by stating things thus; the thirst for knowledge is satisfied, instead of expending itself in a thousand trifling questions; excellent tastes and habits are formed; and the actual power increased. As children grow older, a greater variety of subjects may be introduced, and conversation may be made a preparation for the study of the sciences. How easy, when giving any thing to a child, to remark on its shape, and its difference from other bodies; to ask if it is bounded by straight lines or curves. Let it observe that the straight side is always shorter than the crooked one; that all curves resemble a ball, and when laid on a flat table, touch it in only one spot, while straight sides cut each other, and make sharp corners or angles. Show a bit of wood and a bit of lead, and make the child observe how much heavier one is than the other, and ask which would be the largest, an ounce of wood, or an ounce of lead. Fix the distinction between the weight of a thing, or the force with which the earth draws it, and the volume of a thing, or the space it occupies. Ask how many sides a cube has — make the child show that it must have two to contain its length, two its breadth, two its thickness. Ask which will have the longest sides, an ounce of iron cast in a six or an eight-sided form. Set two of the children running, to show parallel lines going on harmoniously. Take two of different tastes, and represent them as starting together, but constantly diverging; and show how two, who from opposite places perceive an object, hasten toward it in converging lines. You can say, here is Fanny going from me to her seat; she has described a straight line; Sarah would have described a parallel one, but she was attracted by the flowers on the mantel-piece, deviated insensibly, and performed an irregular curve, and therefore reached her seat later — for a straight line is the shortest in the physical, and also in the intellectual and moral world.

Every child should have blocks or counters, that he may practise numbers. He can count them into bands of five and ten, and then consider the collections as units, and

count out five fives or five tens. He will practise this for ever, if a little life is put into it. You can say, "I am tired of these little companies of tens, I mean to have a hundred in each company, and get as many as I can muster." Then you can extend his ambition to a regiment, to an army, only let him get the power of treating hundreds, thousands, &c., as units. In the same way let him divide whole numbers, until he looks upon a unit as a collection of parts, large or small, as we please to make them.

"Mamma, I have a great many robins to-day and only one cake: how shall I divide it?" Divide it into as many equal parts as you have robins, and tell me what share each will have. "Oh mamma, to-day I have but three robins; to-day each will be satisfied." And again, "To-day I have six robins and two cakes; will they have more than they had yesterday, or not so much?" It is very unwise to put off fractions so late as we usually do, in teaching arithmetic. They are as simple and as important as whole numbers; the dividing of a whole thing appeals to children's senses as much as the adding of separate things.

When walking, let children make some geographical observations. They can probably find sufficient variety of land and water to afford assistance to the conceptive faculty. Let them define actual objects, however small; apply the name of shore, and observe whether it is steep or sloping, — whether it has bays, capes and promontories, or runs in an unbroken line. Let them make miniature islands and lakes. If they live near a brook, let them observe that its waters flow into a river, and thence into the sea. Many children think, as the ancients fabled, that streams are the offspring of the ocean; and they are often perplexed about their direction and mouth. In the spring, when the snow melts, plenty of rills make their way downward, uniting and swelling, until they find a recipient of their waters. I remember the delight with which I used to watch these mimic rivers; and I suppose it is pleasant to most children. Let them see that the slightest inclination, is sufficient to determine their course, but that then they roll lazily along; while those which find a steep descent, tumble and hurry

down, wearing deep channels. Let them stop the course of a stream and make a lake, and then let the lake burst through and make a torrent and a waterfall; and in short, try with it all the experiments which Nature performs on a large scale.

Then let them observe hills, valleys, and level spots; well-watered and fertile plains, and barren sands. Notice the different vegetations of different soils and situations; the large-stemmed and juicy-leaved plants of the meadows; the slender compact stems of those on the hills, fitted to yield to the winds. All these observations help to distinct ideas of physical geography, and are something actually seen, to refer to when it is taken up as a study.

Let children early classify objects, first generally, according to the more obvious differences; then by the minor distinctions. First lead by your questions, then demand a good definition without any questions. Linnæus has said that fourteen Latin words are sufficient to give all the distinguishing characteristics of each plant. Almost every one of these words is an answer to an imagined question. Ask how many hard things there are in the room — how many of these are metals — how many metals are bright — what are their common uses. If a child goes to a menagerie, ask, how many of the animals were quadrupeds — how many had claws, horns, shaggy hair, &c. Ask if any two species were precisely alike, and in what consisted the difference. Let a child mention all the things in the room which belonged originally to animals, or to vegetables, or that consist of inorganized matter; which of these has man altered, and how; how are vegetables and animals known from other bodies; do vegetables ever run about, or drag people in carriages; do they love people and seem grateful for care. All things are in a state of change, increasing and growing; is the process the same with all? See that heap of sand; it is larger than it was yesterday — how did it increase?—has it kept its form, and spread, as a calf grows into a cow? — has it new properties and organs, because it is larger? Is there any thing like flowers or fruit developed? — can you predict what its shape will be to-morrow, if it becomes larger? — or will it have new particles added to

its length or breadth, on whichever side the winds deposit them? Here are two geraniums: gardener, give this a little water, and leave the other untouched; we want to see if the wind will bring more leaves, and add to these, as it carried sand to the sand-bank? No — the wind has taken no heed of this poor geranium; it has drooped; but the other has grown. What tall shoots! what broad leaves! Has the wind added any thing to it? Are there any seams in the leaves and stem? No; they are whole; nothing has been joined on the outside, but something has been drawn up inside: the water which the gardener gave it, was taken by its little mouths, into the roots, and has passed up and helped to form broad leaves and stems. If we had given the sand-bank water, would the sand have grown? No; it would have increased by the addition of the water; but it could not have made the particles of water change their nature for its own. But the plant and the animal do this.

How can you distinguish the animal from the vegetable? Here is a strawberry-vine, let us examine it: here is a long slender body supported at each extremity by many little props. Are they legs? has it eyes or ears? or any senses to put it in connexion with the external world? is there any appearance of choice in it? No! it knows nothing of other bodies; cannot desire to approach or avoid them; it is wholly occupied with getting its own living, and bearing Brobdignag strawberries. Here is a spectrum, an insect not uncommon in woods, but seldom detected, from its close resemblance to the plants to which it clings. Unless we saw it moving, we should never imagine it to be more than a bundle of thorns and straws, loosely put together; it is the insect which, for a long time, made it credible that sticks walked about, and sprouted legs. But it has eyes and legs; it is attracted and repelled by many external circumstances, and fills its short life by many voluntary goings and comings, and enjoyments unknown to us. Even the lowest animals have some senses, some sensibilities, some choice, and generally they have the power of moving and obtaining variety. They are lighter and more flexible, and can exist without food longer than

plants. Every thing about them is adapted to their mode of life. What a funny world it would be, if all the animals stood still, and all the plants walked about! Imagine a landscape composed of an elephant, a dromedary, a bevy of ostriches, and a group of monkeys, all rooted to the ground; while the oaks, and stately palms, and swarms of herbs and flowers, sallied forth to take the air. Think of meeting a tall prickly cactus, in a narrow place; or a banian tree, promenading with its innumerable progeny. You might lie down under a shady beech, and before you were aware of it, your canopy might travel out of sight. Besides, how would the animals get food, if they stood still? Would the vegetables come to be eaten? And how would the plants get water, if the roots, with all their little sponges, were out of the ground. Oh, it would be very inconvenient for both parties. The trees had better stand still, and pump up their sap, to spread out into shady boughs; and the animals had better run about, and play, and eat, and sleep, as they fancy. All is right, all is for the best, and exquisitely adapted; there is nothing we can change; we have only to learn how things are!

XII.

My Dear Mary:

There is one practice I require at the earliest age; that of repeating after me. It prepares for speaking and reading elegantly, and for that accomplishment open to all, of repeating poetry, in an expressive and interesting manner. All cannot charm with bright original thoughts, or sweet notes, but all may soothe and delight with the best creations of others; all may have a store of delicate thoughts, with which to while away the long watches of the night, or cheer the sick-room, the twilight hours, or seasons of anguish, when no other solace is possible. I have heard, that in Europe, persons, who have no other gift or accomplishment,

cultivate this. It is not only an easy means of giving pleasure, but of great influence in refining the taste. I am very careful to avoid the ordinary, and present the lofty, beautiful, and suggestive; believing that even in the apparently unsubstantial domain of taste effect follows cause unfailingly; that, the greater variety of culture we bestow, the finer and more graceful will be the growth. These minor preferences, which constitute taste, especially take the form of that which surrounds them. An immense moral feeling, a stricken conscience, or genius gathering up its inward might, will sometimes burst through the mould, but the power of the mould over points of taste and manners, is absolute; every twig, every leaf, nay, every vein and downy spire, owes its form to it. I do not say that all persons, surrounded by the same books and company, will have equally nice literary taste; but that the taste and acquirements of each person will be elegant or otherwise, according to surrounding influences. At one time much of the poetic power of England ran into conceits; again it took a didactic and highly polished form. Its tendency varies in each age, proving that some general cause, foreign to organization, directs it.

You know there are birds, who ever after repeat that sound of the human voice which they first heard; and children have the same impressibility. Their pertinacity in their first blunders proves the fact, and gives us a hint to avail ourselves of it. Every infant should have the name of each thing sounded to it, in a clear and agreeable tone. It should be encouraged to repeat names and words, until it pronounces them as well as it can; and should never be satisfied with merely making itself understood. Do not let a child be left to chance to pick up a language; but frequently encourage it to practice upon short sentences, varying the tone and expression. When three years old it will be able to repeat simple stories after you, a few words at a time, copying tone, accent, and pronunciation exactly. When it has repeated several, it is better to read aloud, and to read the same thing over and over, until both words and meaning are understood. Never pass on, and let it be satisfied with half understanding. Let it hear as much good

reading as possible, and never any which is incorrect. Let it learn the delight of a book; and make the ear and enunciation nice. Then comes a time when you are engaged, and you tell the child he must learn to read for himself. After this has happened several times, and you have told him that you wish to teach him to read, but it is more difficult than any thing he ever did, and you are not willing he should begin unless he will persevere, he will become too eager, to be deterred by slight difficulties. By one means or another he learns his letters. I do not believe any one of the numerous plans can be considered best for all. Some children have quick eyes and soon learn the characters; others never blunder in the sound, but cannot attach it to the character: and some are very slow in perceiving either form or sound, but never forget it when it is once their own. The child must learn each letter thoroughly by his own efforts: you have only to aid him wherever he finds difficulty. This done, I would let him practice as much as he can without fatigue; and would read the letters with him a great deal, and let him point. In short, I would do every thing to smooth this difficult passage. I should still read aloud a great deal, and let him repeat, that he may not, by the difficulty of spelling, be led to read badly. I should correct every fault the first time, and every time, and never consider any fault incorrigible. I should never let him read aloud when alone, for fear of fixing some peculiarity. I would urge the learning of poetry; and the learning to spell a great many easy words.

I am sure that every moment thus carefully devoted to the introduction of any branch, is so much time and perplexity saved for the future. It is for this reason that I think a school for children under six years of age, should be small in number, and the teacher as well recompensed as for older pupils. The individual difficulties require separate treatment at first; the numbers of a school may increase with the age of the pupils; and if they are well trained in every period, at last the teacher is needed merely as a guide in the studies, and a support to the often uncertain perseverance of the young.

Not much need be said of reading, after the first steps, though it occupies more time, and requires more attention than any study. It is needless to enlarge upon its importance, for all acknowledge it, though so few excel in the art. At first I let the children read simple tales and dialogues; afterward, history alternately with poetry. Reading consumes a great many of the school hours; I therefore make it subservient to history. I relate anecdotes and customs, and make them compare one nation with another, and observe how customs grow out of climate, and are brought from one country to another, and are retained when their peculiar fitness has ceased. We have our map and our table of chronology before us, and refer to them frequently. When about six years old, the children learn short lessons in the history we have thus read over. They learn important names and dates, and give the meaning, but not the words of the author. I begin this exercise early, because young children give a story in their own words with great ease; while those of eleven years, find it very difficult, unless they have previously practiced. Most children of six, when they understand what is required, will learn a chapter by reading it three times. If we have not read the history recently, I always give out the next lesson, as soon the last is recited. I notice any thing particularly important or obscure, and perhaps tell anecdotes about it. The next day they learn, and the day after, recite it. I always hear the previous lesson a second time. I prefer this to a general review, because it fixes what they have learned, just as it is in danger of being forgotten. Almost all my lessons are given out and explained one day, and studied the next, and recited the third, and then more or less thoroughly recited a second time. Will you remember this in the hasty accounts I shall be obliged to give you?

XIII.

My Dear Mary:

Spelling faultlessly, and writing with ease, are the next requisites of a polite education; a person, therefore, feels ashamed who is not skilled in these. Considered as to their effect on the mind, they have but a secondary value, the value of a discipline; they do not add to knowledge or suggest thought. To spell perfectly, requires great practice and accurate habits. I have daily lessons in a spelling-book and in a common book. The latter teaches the participles and compound words, and a much greater variety than the spelling-book. The children also recite definitions; I explain the words, and use them in sentences, before they are studied; and the older ones look for words in a dictionary. Those who are able, write dictated lessons, observing all the capitals, points, &c. This exercise is a favorite one, and it is needed; for many persons are puzzled in writing a word, who can spell it at another time. But little can be said about spelling, though the actual study occupies a great deal of time; but all the time expended in study is gained in recitation. Sometimes I show by the watch, how quickly a hundred words, well learned, may be spelled; or a Latin verb or vocabulary lesson, or any lesson not requiring explanation, may be recited. That is a well-ordered school, in which the actual recitation of the scholars takes but little time; at the same time the frequent interruption of the recitations, by explanations and illustrations, is the best proof of the interest of the teacher. In all the lessons, I direct attention to the spelling of difficult words. I show their derivation and formation and signification; also when they are the same, or slightly varied, in other languages. I have heard lately of a very interesting exercise for those who know several languages. It is to read from a large dictionary all that is known of the derivation of the words and of their different significations. When girls are to be thoroughly trained in

other languages, so much spelling of English words is not needed. But it is very well to acquire skill in this, and in writing, early, before it is known how much more interesting other studies are; for these exercises are insupportable to older girls, whose minds are advanced; and are never so accurately learned as in childhood.

A pencil is one of the first playthings a child fancies, and great use may be made of this taste, by one who has skill. If the child can get sufficient command of the pencil to print the letters as they are learned, it interests him, and facilitates his learning them. I would let him print as much and as long as he pleases; it gives a distinct remembrance of the letter, and prepares for a clear and legible hand. When he can print perfectly well, and begins to be tired of it, let him gradually change to a round joined hand, without losing the upright legible character. You must be very careful to prevent bad habits, and inculcate the good habit of making each copy better than the preceding. I find children need a great deal of encouragement in writing; their eyes are very quick to detect their own faults, and they are often discouraged by the numerous difficulties. The blots, erasures, and spatters, excite more feeling than they deserve; and I often have to say that I do not expect them to write well; I only expect them to try; if they could write well, they would not need to practice writing. This argument, that it is the difficult and unknown which is to be learned, I often use, particularly with new scholars. I ask them if they wish to pass their lives in going over and over the things they know, or if they wish to learn the things they do not know, and which are therefore difficult? I interest them in their copies: write proverbs, short and pithy, on the black-board, and explain them; or give corresponding proverbs in two or three languages, to be copied: or I write the name and country and date of some celebrated man, and tell a little story about him. I let them copy the poetry they are to learn, and French words and phrases. I try in all ways to lighten the tediousness of the handwriting. I praise those who write well, and try to keep up the standard of writing in school.

XIV.

My Dear Mary:

I find a great difference among my pupils as to their fondness for arithmetic. The older girls are very averse to it. I think they cannot have outgrown it: for it never ceased to be a very attractive and satisfactory study to me; I had so much satisfaction in entering into the laws of numbers, and working under and with them. But my girls do not feel this: they are pleased to cipher a little; pleased to answer a few questions in mental arithmetic; but if I follow it up, greater inattention and weariness are shown than in any other study. This is not the case with the little ones: not a recitation is made, but I am called upon to enjoy some new discovery in numbers. The older girls probably felt this pleasure when they first perceived the facts; and if these had not remained isolated, but had been referred to other relations of numbers, and their dependence and agreement shown, the first pleasure would have become more deep and lasting.

I can remember when such facts as that nine added to a number of two figures makes the unit figure one less than at first, gave me absolute pleasure, and often came into my thoughts out of school. There are many such facts not worth writing, but serviceable in quickening the perceptions of children: such as that two even numbers added, always make an even one; an even and an odd one make an odd one, and two odd ones make an even one, because the two odd units are added together and become even; that if it is asked how many times 3 in 4×6, as 3 is half of 6 it must be taken twice as often, and the other factor must be doubled. I mention these examples to show you of what slight things I avail myself to interest them.

I also state the uses of numbers in common life; that by keeping accounts we are able to be honest: that we use numbers in building houses, railroads, in navigation,

astronomy, and in calculating all powers and forces. And I have thus become aware of my own ignorance of what we call numbers. How limited is the knowledge of them contained in books! How many relations and forces exist among the worlds above of which we cannot conceive! I have the strangest feeling when I try to embrace or fathom the whole of any subject. I have hold of one end, and the other stretches into infinity. It is wonderful that in the small portion we know, all should be so orderly, so unfailing: we might expect unknown laws to come in and disturb the action of those we know.

But if arithmetic is valuable as a training, it is more so as leading to the perception of order.

Order is congenial to the mind, inspires confidence, gives repose. Therefore we should always present arithmetical facts as symmetrical proportions and harmonious relations of the great whole. We thus not only give intellectual gratification but intellectual training. The mind imitates what it admires, and lives according to its own analogous laws.

Every time that a child perceives that any portion of the universe moves according to principles, submits to laws, he receives an impression more lively than we can create by our voluntary influence; he is elevated; he perceives the beauty and value of law, without reference to himself; while if we seek to acquaint him with the law in his own case, we may excite resistance and suspicion of our motives.

Numbers and geometry, and even pure mathematics, seem scarcely in themselves to form a science. They are rather a consideration of certain phenomena in the other sciences, set apart from their results, and treated in the abstract. As thought is so much quicker than action, we reach results at a glance which it would be tedious to work out in matter; and can pass on to truths which would be quite beyond us, were the understanding obliged to wait upon the senses.

Numbers and proportions are the skeleton of Nature, and having once acknowledged their fitness we take little interest in repeating our operations; but in Nature, whose rules these numbers represent, we are never weary of tracing their presence. We ask eagerly of each new chemical sub-

stance, its multiple; will *it* also submit to the laws of definite proportion. We pull the flower in pieces, to see if the number of the stamens is a multiple of the number of the petals, and the number of the petals a multiple of that of the sepals. We unwind the cone of the fir-tree, to trace the law of spirals, which brings round its scales each to its appointed place. Does a new orb become visible in the depths of space? A hundred telescopes are pointed to verify upon it known laws, and study the new illustration of them which it affords.

Doubtless, each relation and proportion of numbers has in Nature its fit working; introduces variety, secures symmetry and harmony of sound form and color. Science recognizes new instances of this every day. The fluid particles of the future crystal move over each other without settled form, until a new law enters; then pole flies to pole; beautiful, regular, lasting shapes ensue. Heat, light, gravitation, all the powers which radiate, teach us squares and cubes; chemistry teaches progressions, astronomy still more intricate operations. Could I bring to my teachings the countless manifestations of these, did I even know as much as I might have known, there would be no more weariness. But I was always satisfied, when by verifying a few instances, I reached the law. I then knocked away my scaffolding, and went in search of something else. Now that I wish to interest young persons, who do not yet love the law for its own sake, I feel a great want of beautiful natural expressions of the law. Some children cannot receive the law by itself; others receive it, and are too well contented with its barrenness. I wish to show it to them all gorgeous and complete, so that if one manifestation finds a deaf ear, another may meet a willing one. The great charm of the natural sciences is in this two-fold feeling; satisfaction in the law, and delight in its embodying. If we are ignorant of law, Nature remains a mere mass of facts, and restricted even in these: if we neglect the beautiful outward facts, law loses sublimity and interest. As long as man possesses both soul and senses, he must interpret Nature through both: he must keep the abstract present to his intellect, and the concrete to his eye.

Numbers are a portion of the law forcibly severed from the rest, and from their natural expressions; and only one small corner of them is taught in school; that which is useful in every day life. Consequently, instead of enlarging, this study is apt to narrow, the mind. The faculties being fixed so long on microscopic objects, lose their original boundless vision: they are made acute, it is true, and find satisfaction in their little portion of the law; but this is a trifle compared to their birthright.

By giving so much time to numbers as is often done, we treat the child like a prisoner; we make him con the narrow walls of a cell, when the universe should be open to him.

Let the captive, in the lonely Spielberg, obtain for the solace of his weary days, an hour-glass: with what interest he watches the swift descent of the sand, and notes on his prison floor the progress of the sun during each period! What important inferences can he draw from the unfailing daily accomplishment of these two coinciding phenomena! It proves to him that the relations between the sun and earth are regulated by law, and that the descent of the smallest particle to earth is no less subject to a fixed law. Even from this small page of Nature, he learns the unfailing certainty of law, and the prompt obedience of matter.

It is because Nature thus repeats her lessons, that some persons deem it unimportant what a child studies, and regard only the developement of his powers, and the training and habits he receives. I cannot but consider that the nature of the subjects first presented, will materially influence his developement; and for this reason I think arithmetic, as it is usually taught, occupies too much time. By directing attention to the law, we obviate this objection. I like to present law, whether in morals, science, or numbers, as Fate itself; descending like an armed man into the kingdom of matter, and working itself out in every jot and tittle.

I announce a law of proportion, give an example, and state that it must always be so. I bid the children vary the numbers, the mere things, in any way they can devise, and

the law comes, swift, irresistible, and all must conform. I lead them very early to separate the proportions and relations from the particular numbers, and to observe that the law lasts, though these are changed. I teach them a childish sort of algebra: let them imagine conditions for unknown numbers, and operate on them; and then they substitute one set and another, and find the answer true for all.

But I must hasten to the strictly practical part of my teaching. When the children can count, ascending and descending to any extent, I ask how we shall express these numbers. Shall we write as many marks as there are units, or shall we have a different character for each number? How long would it take to count the strokes, or to learn a million of characters? Could the mind grasp so many?

Then I say, "If they will be very attentive, I will teach them to express all numbers, by only ten characters, arranged in different ways. I let them practice with these until they can use them readily; for in arithmetic particularly, one obstacle at a time is enough.

After fixing in their minds that every right-hand figure is a unit, I say: "Now I am going to have a column of tens standing on the left of my units: remember, none must come into this second row but tens, for they will all change into tens the moment they enter."

They now practice addition: at first very thoroughly in the head and then on the slate: they write and recite addition tables, counting them each time.

Then I give sums to add which exceed two figures in the answer, and ask how we shall write the answer. Some can guess that I shall have a row of hundreds.

I detain them on numeration a long while; I give a great part of the time devoted to arithmetic, to obtain the power of conceiving numbers. If the understanding is weak, so much the more need of strengthening it; so much the more danger of confusing it, by offering irregular numbers and complicated relations. Now in these tens and hundreds all is regular: they rise, by the most simple gradation, to the greatest numbers used; the stepping

stones are skilfully arranged, and the mind that can reach one, is prepared for the next.

I would give much more time, at first, to secure force and precision of mental grasp, than is usually done. By suitable training, any person might extract the cube root mentally, like Newton, or keep in his memory the first six powers of all numbers from ten to one hundred, like the blind Euler. Captives who have thus kept alive their faculties, show us what may be done even late in life. Far more may be attained when numbers are first presented to the mind; and though few would use their powers for such purposes as Newton and Euler, they would have a clearer conception of distance, space, and all which is the subject of calculation. How few persons can conceive distinctly the extent of a number of more than twelve figures; and how much do many scientific facts lose in sublimity, by this incapacity to grasp them!

It is not merely to improve the power of conception, that I would keep the child so long in numeration. Let him stretch his conceptive faculty a few hundreds, still the series reaches into infinity; and there is no use in his conceiving more than in some science or other he can apply to reality. I should hope also to make his idea of the first hundreds and thousands more distinct. He should have an ideal arrangement clear and ready for use; and all numbers should be as familiar to him as the letters of the alphabet. He should write them over and over, every way, skipping, and from dictation, always beginning at the right hand. Meanwhile he should do sums in addition on the slate; and difficult ones, for he would be as familiar with large, as with small numbers.

I would have subtraction practiced in the same manner; going over the same process with a great many different numbers. Thus 30 less 0 is how many? 30 less 1 is how many? up to 30 less 30. I never omit 0 in any of the processes: because children should be able to distinguish between a number taken 0 times, and one with 0 added to it.

The slow recitation of the subtraction table obliges them to keep in their heads two series, an ascending and a descending one, beside a constant number; and thus in-

creases the power of retaining and comparing numbers. At first I ask questions, and each operation is performed slowly, and often on the fingers: but after understanding and practicing them on their slates, they answer with great ease and quickness.

When they are well practiced in subtraction, I set down a very large sum of the same numbers to be added: they think it very tedious, and I agree, and offer to show them a shorter way. I tell them they can do each sum more quickly by carrying part of it, already done, in their heads. I ask them if it would be convenient to gather and grind our corn every time we want bread; or to shear our sheep, and spin and weave the wool, every time we want a frock. I tell them the person can do most in any emergency, and can always exert his powers to the greatest advantage, who has made the best preparation, physically and intellectually: and if they keep their minds amply furnished and in good working order, they can do all which is demanded. Thus if they can multiply all the units as quickly as they can conceive of them, they can multiply the largest sum. Then I begin with 2 taken 0 times, 2 taken once, &c., and go on slowly, making them observe the principle in each instance. I never hurry them in multiplication. If a child could not perceive the working of the rule beyond the first few lines, I would keep him in these a year.

Division comes next; far the most difficult of the first processes, and best explained as analyzing a past process of multiplication; as finding out how often a small number was taken to make a larger one. It requires very great practice, particularly when fractions are not taught early.

I often ask the different factors of numbers: this helps to multiply and divide large sums. I draw squares on the board, and show that 12 of them may be arranged, 4 in a line, in 3 lines, or 6 in a line, in 2 lines. I suppose a man buying a cake of 48 lbs.; and then for convenience preferring 2 cakes of 24 lbs.; then I ask if he could take the same quantity in still smaller cakes, and what their weight would be.

Then I go over fractions as thoroughly as I have gone over whole numbers. Colburn's is an excellent book for

these, but the transitions from easy to difficult questions are often abrupt, and the teacher must supply exercises. The children do not leave fractions until they can conceive of a number as whole at one moment, and at the next, divided into fractions of any size, and can use these fractions as readily and understandingly as whole numbers.

I should not hurry a girl to learn more than these elementary rules applied to whole numbers and fractions, until she was twelve years old. Then she could use figures as easily as letters, and two more years would carry her through Colburn's Sequel and into algebra. I like to teach algebra. It is really a peep into the secrets, an opportunity of moving the machine ourselves to free ourselves from the cumbrous processes of arithmetic, and deal only with the laws.

My dear Mary, do not read this letter aloud, or your auditor will be disposed to make a hasty escape from the *Law*. I was not aware the word recurred so frequently. I express by it the relations and order existing in any series of events, — relations caused by the nature of the agents and objects; not the execution of absolute and external controlling power, the meaning which human law often bears.

XV.

My Dear Mary:

I have given so much time to arithmetic, that I must touch slightly on geometry. I do not teach it as a science very early. At first we need only give names, and help children to arrange what Nature teaches. She makes them geometricians by direct perception, for the sake of self-preservation, and of being in connexion with the external world. They need no alphabet, no characters, to understand geometry.

Geometry includes knowledge of extension and form, and the properties of forms. Size and form are perceived by the

senses; their properties are partly perceived by the senses, partly judged by the understanding. Of all mental processes this begins earliest, and depends least on the will. Its correctness in infants, depends on the acuteness of the senses; in older persons, partly on the nice decision of the understanding. Present two oranges, differing in size, to an infant; it will almost certainly seize the larger. There seems no selfish emotion in the case; the two impress themselves on his brain as of unequal worth, and he stretches forth his hand for the larger. Let us suppose a child whose senses are rather dull, and let him receive the best training: let him discriminate his impressions, and interpret rightly all he learns through his senses. Meanwhile let a child of quick eye neglect to analyze and reflect on his impressions; and at the age of twenty, place before the two, complicated forms, or an irregular bit of ground, and the one who had originally least perception of size, will estimate them most truly. So much may mental training supply organic deficiencies.

But they are intended to assist, not to supply the place of each other. The mind should be alive to judge all which the senses reveal: and the senses should go forth, not blindly, but with a purpose to bring home what is wanting to complete the judgment.

How long an infant will contemplate a chair, or turn over a plaything! It cannot satisfy itself with gazing. Soon past impressions begin to correct the present ones. At first it stretches out its hand for a candle across a room: soon it recollects that it cannot reach the candle without crossing the room, and throws itself forward in the effort to get there. During the first years the impressions of the senses are continually corrected by the judgment, and at last this is done so quickly that it is imperceptible. There is now danger of passing too rapidly from the first impression, and losing it. All children have the true picture; as they prove by their frequent questions about some object as large as others in the landscape, but which, from its want of interest, we do not notice; and also by the difficulty with which they catch some object, not very prominent in appearance, but to us most interesting, from our

previous knowledge of it. Among grown persons, none but artists retain the true picture; and to call up at will the mental or visual perception, requires a mind of great power, and a fine organization.

We can do much very early to aid the perception, and something to form the judgment. When children are about five years of age, I make them acquainted with lines and forms, and their simple properties, in order. I have colored diagrams hung against the wall, to occupy the leisure moments. They draw straight lines on the board in every direction, and describe them. They try to enclose a space in two straight lines, and find out why they cannot. They enclose a space in three straight lines, and then in four, and so on, and learn the name of each figure. Then I ask them if they can enclose a space by one line of any sort; and show them that they can, by one which constantly changes its direction, because it will turn and meet itself, making an irregular curve, or a circle.

When lines are well understood I introduce angles, as the space included where straight lines cross; and show the properties of the right-angle, and of triangles. I illustrate fractions by showing the angles formed by the crossing of two straight lines, or of twenty straight lines in the same spot, to be always equal in amount; because the space remains the same, whether divided into two or twenty parts.

I give them solid blocks, and fix early the name of each figure, cone, pyramid, cube; it saves many blunders.

I will spare you more instances, though I multiply them exceedingly in my teaching. All the aid which can be given in numbers is by securing practice, and by presenting them in numerous relations, so as to illustrate a question. Occasionally light is thus let in on the benighted listener, but usually the child clears himself by a way of his own; and every time he does, his faith and interest in numbers is increased. Each person forms, very early, some mode of calculating; fixes some favorite relations and facts in his memory, and from these deduces all the rest.

It is very desirable he should early learn to depend on his own nuclei and ways, even if they are not the quickest: I do not wish to confine him to my particular modes. For

this reason, as soon as his figures are legible to himself, he does his sums alone. At first, I explain each question and state it, but soon, I will not tell him whether he is to add or divide; I throw him entirely on himself.

The comprehending and stating of a sum is the most difficult step to induce. When children get into the right path they are delighted, their faces light up, I am called to share their satisfaction. They say they should like arithmetic, if it were all like this. I tell them it is all so, if they will find will it out; "a mighty maze, but not without a plan."

XVI.

My Dear Mary:

When I begin geography as a study, I tell the children they will have to commit to memory some entirely new facts, but I will give them as little as possible to learn in this manner, if they will remember all I tell them. It is very desirable that the first impression of the earth's surface should be given by a globe, the largest that can be procured. I do not use maps until the great features of the earth's surface are well known. When the earth's diameter, circumference and surface are learned, I show by the globe the daily motion from west to east. The particles most distant from the central axis of the globe describe the largest circles, and move very rapidly; with the nearness to the axis the motion becomes less; and on the surface of the globe also, as the circles become smaller and approach the axis, the motion diminishes. So that an atom at the equator travels twenty-five thousand miles a day, or a thousand miles an hour, while an atom at the poles has no rotatory motion. This I illustrate by letting four girls join hands, and chalking on the floor a circle for the outer one. She travels farther and faster than

the others; the inner one merely turns round, and a line may be imagined drawn from her head to her feet, which need not even turn round. This imaginary line, always pointing in the same direction, and passing through the centre of the earth, we call its axis. The pole before us, when the rising sun is on our right, is called the north pole, the opposite end the south pole. They are the only parts which always point in the same direction, and serve to judge all other directions. Then I explain east and west as directions, while on our globe north and south are points. This removes many difficulties of latitude and longitude. I show the equator, and lines of latitude, as drawn with reference to the earth's axis, and as helping us to fix the position and extent of countries; this leads to much conversation about climate, productions, and customs. Longitude furnishes many interesting questions about the time of day at different places, which children understand very readily. They are never tired of tracing the changes; of seeing a place come up under the morning rays of the sun, pass through noon and evening, and disappear; of finding all the places at which it is noon at once; and of fancying what is being done at different places. They also trace lines of latitude and longitude round the globe, mentioning all the places they pass through, and commit them to memory.

Then we observe the surface of the globe, its irregular continents, its clusters of islands, the great proportion of water. We observe how much more is known of the northern hemisphere, and how much more has taken place there than in the southern hemisphere.

I describe each variety of land and water, and show instances of each. They are then studied in the geography, and examples sought on the globe. When each girl can approach the globe, and mention the capes, rivers, mountains, &c., as fast as she can see them, I turn to Asia, the most anciently-peopled country.

While they look at it, I give a slight sketch of its history, its inhabitants, its natural features. It has always been very thickly peopled, but by nations too luxurious to develope fine character, and injured by the extreme fertility of

their soil, and their gold and precious stones. Still these nations believe themselves the wisest in the world, and have among them proofs that civilized and learned people must have dwelt in Asia, before Europe had emerged from barbarism. I describe its lofty mountains standing on elevated plains in the centre, covered with eternal snow, and the large rivers pouring off from them on the east and north; the Yenissei and Obi, fed by the continual ice of the mountains, flowing from a great height, with a rapid and steady current to the Frozen Ocean; and the Indus and Ganges, rising not far from the southern edge of the same extensive plateau, and under the influence of tropical rains, overflowing their banks, bringing fertility to the parched earth, preparing the rice harvest, and gliding through very different scenes to the equatorial regions. I mention the rapid growth of vegetation in the south; the bamboo bristling with spines, rising sixty feet in one season, and the huge vines and thorny creepers binding the forests in one impenetrable mass; and the abundance of spices and fragrant trees in the islands, sufficient to supply the world ever since the days of Solomon; and the volcanoes so numerous in these islands, that fearful eruptions are scarcely noticed by the natives.

The boundaries are learned, and the next day I require all I have told them, to be repeated.

Afterward they study each country in succession; learn its boundaries, chief natural features, cities and inhabitants. When I give out the lesson, I remark on the size of the rivers, their rise and course, their use in fertilizing the country, and conveying its products — we observe the direction of the mountains, and their probable effect on the climate. I mention the productions and general appearance of the country. Many questions are asked about each nation, and I put as much life into my answers as possible. I mention a few of the most prominent traits, and those most unlike ours. I contrast the character of Oriental with Western civilization. For instance, if Japan is the country we are studying, I do not say merely that it consists of three large islands east of Asia, rich in spices, and with civilized inhabitants; but I tell them it is crowded with people who

differ almost totally from us. Instead of sending out ships to exchange goods with all the nations of the earth, and publishing papers that all the people may know every new way of doing things, the Japanese only let into their country two Dutch ships once a year: they keep guns to shoot all other persons as enemies. And they have a law that whoever introduces an improvement in ship-building shall receive thirty blows of the bamboo. Thus every thing goes on as it has done for thousands of years.

The Mikado sits a number of hours every day on his throne, immovable, lest by turning his head he bring down part of the empire: when he has sat the requisite number of hours, he puts his crown on the throne as a substitute.

Their first sign of mourning is to turn all the screens and sliding-doors topsy-turvy, and all their garments inside out; probably to show that all things appear changed to the afflicted.

Their use of fans is very amusing: soldiers, priests, every human being over five years of age, has one on his head, or in his girdle; visiters receive dainties on them; the schoolmaster punishes with them: the beggar receives his alms on them.

They are so fond of gilding, that the bills, legs, and claws of birds, served up at table, are elegantly gilt.

I contrast the history of their country for the last century with ours, and consider the prospects of each for the next century. Such accounts are associated with the name and position of a country, and inspire a desire to hear more. Sometimes a country is interesting from its great men, or from events; sometimes from natural curiosities; but there is always something which may be seized. It is well also to give an early knowledge of the comparative antiquity of nations: and of their importance as depending on character, and not on the size of their country.

I give these lessons orally, because I do not know a geography sufficiently simple and graphic for little children. When they are older, they take a text-book for the dry facts, and I do all I can to connect them with history, and make them interesting. They note very carefully the relative size of countries, their inland or maritime position,

the size of the larger rivers, and the height of the more important mountains. I have the size of the different continents, islands and seas, reduced to circles painted of different colors, and the number of square miles attached to each. These hang against the wall, and as they are arranged from the largest to the smallest, they catch the eye, and are easily learned.

They find the direction of one place from another. They learn the compass, and are very accurate in determining the intermediate points. It takes from one to two years to go over the globe in this manner: I insist on its being done thoroughly, or I give no sketches.

XVII.

My Dear Mary:

If you are not over weary of the earth, I must detain you upon it a little longer. I must give an idea of its position in space, and of its relative proportions and connexions with other bodies; and to my practiced numeralists, these numbers, however vast, are not mere figures. I tell them what first made men suspect that the earth was not a flat surface. When a ship leaves the shore the people on board lose sight first of the ground, then of the houses, steeples and hills; and when vessels meet on the ocean, they see first each others' masts, and then the decks and hulls. On a flat surface, the whole ship would be seen at once; therefore, wherever this gradual appearance takes place, the earth must fall off from a flat surface. Now it is found to take place in every direction precisely in the same manner; therefore the earth has no flat surface, therefore it must be nearly a sphere. This form is confirmed by the round shadow on the moon in an eclipse, and

by the spheroidal forms of the other planets. They ask if mountains do not interrupt this perfect form, and I tell them that the highest mountains are in proportion to the whole earth, but as large as a grain of sand to a large-sized globe; and that three fourths of the outline are formed by water. Then I explain gravity as the power which retains every thing at the earth's surface and in its place; and illustrate the attracting power of the earth by that of a large magnetized ball rolled in iron filings. I do not hurry this, but give countless instances of its various manifestations: and do not leave it until they have a perfect conception of this vast globe studded with people, with their feet toward the centre.

Then on my black-board I draw a segment of a very large circle, and beneath it a straight line. A few inches of the lines cut off, appear parallel; but in a yard the difference is perceptible. I place a figure on each, and represent each as capable of seeing but a few inches, and ask if their world would not appear the same to both?

I tell them the space we see is smaller compared to the whole earth than those few inches to that whole circle; that the surface of our globe varies from a flat surface, by eight inches only in a mile, a quantity not perceptible.

I explain the two motions of the earth; I show that a blow through the centre of gravity sends the object forward without any rotation on its axis; but a blow not through the centre of gravity will send it forward, and make it rotate also. An ivory ball or a top shows these two motions independent of each other; in a top the rotatory motion often outlasts the other. By taking a top while spinning in the hand, and moving it round in a circle, you can show the separate motions: and you can then explain the difference between the place of the orbit and the place of the rotation. I show the north pole pointed steadily in the same direction, and consequently inclined sometimes toward the sun, sometimes away from it. Perhaps the motion first imparted to the earth inclined its axis, and thus caused the different length of the days and the varying seasons, allowing to one half the globe repose, and waking the other to renewed life. By it, light and heat are more uniformly distributed; the polar regions gain a brilliant day

and a rapid summer; and the torrid zone is saved from drought and barrenness. The questions and experiments arising from this simple cause are very interesting, and occupy us a long time.

Then I explain the earth's orbit; and the two forces which regulate the motion of one body round another. These may be graphically portrayed on a black-board, by one line tending forward continually, and another continually trying to fall into the centre, and the object influenced by both revolving between them nearly in a circle. I have shown it thus, and found it instantly understood.

If you knew how slowly I advance in these lessons, turning aside for every thing important; and how often they are wholly or partially repeated, you would suppose I needed a superhuman endowment of patience; but, as I have often said, all depends on the banner we fight under. I could bear much for fair Science.

On my pupils' part I demand close attention; they must not only hear with pleased wonder, but grasp the truth, reflect on it, and apply it. If they make no effort, the finest glimpses into creation will not strengthen their powers so much as a column of spelling over which they make effort. I give them many facts arising from the subject, to be learned accurately, and I believe these far better for their minds than lessons written only to be studied. Exertion I insist on as a duty; talents are intrusted to them, and they are responsible for the use of them.

I urge this particularly, because the danger of oral instruction is, that the sinews of the pupil's mind may suffer. Yet I cannot but think that its certain and manifold advantages far outweigh its possible evils. Even the particles of matter by proximity induce changes in each other. Nitric acid has no effect on platina, but an alloy of silver and platina dissolves in it with great ease. By a small quantity of yeast the whole loaf is made light. In the spiritual world the influences, whose operation escapes analysis, are yet more numerous; much is quickened and developed by a process too subtle for our perceptions. The difference between the living teacher and the dead book, cannot be set forth on paper; it must be felt to be appreciated.

Oral instruction has another advantage; it supplies a chasm which few writers have yet stepped forth to fill. We have excellent books for teachers, but few or none which bring important subjects clearly before young minds. I know not whether the difficulty of the task, or the fear of being tedious, has deterred authors from supplying this want, and perhaps more books of the sort exist than I am aware of. To supply the want himself, brings too much labor on the teacher; more than he can perform faithfully, if he has other claims.

XVIII.

My Dear Mary:

On looking over my last, I resolved to give you no more instances of my teachings. I cannot do them justice in so small a space. I cannot be general without being superficial, as none but a great artist can give a likeness by a few strokes. I was so afraid I should be carried beyond the solar system into the regions of infinite space, that I put a strong constraint on myself, and gave a most meagre account of a favorite study. It is in behalf of another favorite study, that I now waive my resolution, and offer you a few geological considerations, which I present to my pupils early, because from the vastness and changeableness of the subject matter, they so eminently set forth the supremacy and durability of the law.

When my earth is poised in mid-air, I display a drawing of a segment of it, looking very opaque, with a semi-transparent water enfolding it, and around in its true proportion the thin air slightly colored, so as to mark the limit of the terrestrial world. I tell the children that probably no atoms have escaped beyond it, or been added to it, since it was

first hung in the sky ; and that nearly the same proportion of atoms is in a solid, in a fluid, and in an aëriform state. But we suppose the particles to be differently arranged ; that there are continents where there were once seas, and that the ocean flows over sunken lands. They cannot bear to have the solid earth taken from under them, and are quite relieved when they find so many ages necessary to change its surface. I tell them we know nothing about its state at first, but we suppose it to have been a fluid mass, which, as we see daily from drops of water, would take the form of a sphere, and its revolving motion would make it bulge where the motion was greatest. I instruct them about the atmosphere, and its wonderful adaptation to our wants ; that its volume and nature never change materially, though millions of men and animals use it.

Neither perhaps has the relative proportion of land and water altered ; but they have changed places, and altered the surface without disturbing the form of our globe. By observing its present appearance, its hills, valleys, continents, fossil plants and animals, we can decipher much of its history, and often ascertain the time and order of events. I ask the children what their conclusions would be if they found burnt ruins, or skeletons of dead Indians, seated in their graves, or marble columns and carvings at the bottom of a clear lake. And if the Indians had near them skeletons, trophies of their prowess in the chase, different from the bones of any living animal, would they not conclude there had been animals unlike ours ?

In the depths of the earth are remains of shells and plants which received their form, not from fire or water, but from the principle of life. They could not have breathed and lived there ; consequently the position of the rocks in which they are imbedded must have changed. Those who have studied the structure of animals and plants, can from a fragment decide the family and general habits of the individual, and can tell what climate it would require. Once in Virginia, certain claws were found very large and much hooked : they were supposed to belong to a carnivorous animal, perhaps to an enormous lion. They were sent to Paris, and the scientific men there observed immediately, that where

carnivorous animals have a little bone under the last joint of the paw, this had none: but it had a small bone on the upper side. They knew therefore that it belonged to quite a different race of animals, the sloth; who use their claws only to hang upon boughs till they have stripped them, and who roll the claw under the feet in walking. To draw out the claw, a muscle passes from the inner end, over the bone, to the next joint, and ends in a little bone. The cat and lion, on the contrary, draw up their claws by a muscle on the top of the bone, and dart them out by a muscle under it, which also ends in a little bone. This apparently slight difference decided whether the animal had been one of the fiercest or most sluggish creatures in existence.

But we are not obliged to judge from fragments only. The impressions of plants and shells on stone are perfectly distinct: every fibre of the leaf is visible, and whole skeletons, and sometimes whole animals are found well preserved. Small specimens of these fossils are easily procured, and give children a better knowledge of them than any description.

I proceed to tell them that they are found in layers, often many hundred feet thick, piled one upon the other in the earth's crust, and each containing its peculiar animals and plants, for the growth of which a long period was requisite: so that we may regard each as a volume of history, going back to ages where imagination can scarcely follow.

Each of these strata was once the upper one, and enjoyed water and light. In the water the aquatic animals lived, and left their shells on the loose sand at the bottom when they died. The sea-plants, the delicate lilies, are upright, as if slowly imbedded; the shells lie whole and level, as if at the bottom of a tranquil ocean; trees are standing, or gently inclined, as if the earth had been gradually deposited around them, as the sand is heaped round the monuments of Egypt. All speaks of a slow quiet process, occupying a vast duration of time.

In the upper strata the plants and animals are such as could live in the present climate, and in some instances are the same as existing species; as we descend, they become

more and more unlike ours. In England, species like the present are gradually replaced by coral reefs, and the tree-ferns and palms of tropical climates.

This leads to a discussion on climates, and to an inquiry whether plants can be induced to grow in climates very unlike their native ones. I remark how limited our power is in this respect, that by our utmost cherishing we can only coax a few of them a little further north than they grew originally; the vine and the olive have never spread further north since the time of Tacitus.

I state the causes which influence climate, beside latitude. Some of them have observed the difference in warmth between the north and south side of a hill; between a place like Nahant and an inland village. Thus they understand easily that the elevation of continents, the neigborhood of ice, of burning deserts, of mountains, and the presence of currents and of winds, modify the climate.

I take each cause separately, and let the children imagine different circumstances, and infer the consequences. I tell them that Europe is warmer than North America, because the ocean flows in more freely to the north of it; and thus the heat of the tropics is carried up by it, and interposed between that and the pole. But in the northern part of America rises land three thousand feet high; it reaches the colder regions of the atmosphere, and becomes a vast reservoir of ice and snow. Then I describe Africa like an immense furnace sending out its heat to Europe and Asia: the vertical sun beats down on its white sands, seldom moistened, or sheltered by any verdure.

I ask what would be the climate of Europe if the southern part were to sink into the sea, and an equal extent of land to rise on the north? What would be the effect on the United States, were we to fill the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea with high mountain land, radiating and reflecting the vertical rays of the sun, and let in the ocean freely over Labrador and the British Possessions. They are much amused by the idea that without our moving winter may fly from us, and pomegranates, palms and citrons, supplant our forests. They trace all the effects within their

capacity, and thus exercise at once, their conceptive faculty and their understanding.

Children are never tired of such fancies; and it is a provision of Nature, which we should use to fix the law in their minds, that they will repeat a lesson or an experiment over and over again, if we only vary the statement a little. It is agreeable to their feeble persistence to have nine parts known, and only one to be sought.

I have known a system of teaching French founded on this trait. The teacher taught orally, "Have you a hat?" and then, "Have you a sword?" and then, "Seek you a hat?" and "Seek you a sword?" and so on; never introducing more than one word at a time, in teaching many thousand.

Afterward we speak of the climate and vegetation of places at different elevations and in different latitudes; of island climates, which the sea equalizes by its waves and its breezes; of climates like ours made excessively cold in winter by the ice north of us, and excessively hot in summer, by the sun in a sky free from mists. So that New York has the summer of Rome and the winter of Copenhagen, and Quebec, the summer of Paris and the winter of Petersburg. We mention the advantages of each variety of climate, the varied scenery and enjoyments of the excessive climates, the sudden bursting forth of spring, the flowers under the snow, the brilliant colors of the autumnal forests, the spirit and vigor imparted to the inhabitants by the piercing winds, and also the increased trouble of suiting dress and houses to such extremes, and the peaked roofs, to carry off the snow, instead of the graceful models of the South of Europe.

In the island climate, we notice the ever-springing verdure, the health not undermined by sudden changes, the freedom of a more out-of-door life.

We mention the different plants of each climate; that those which need intense heat and ripen rapidly, thrive in excessive climates, while those which require less heat and grow slowly, prefer insular climates.

Iceland is an instance of the great variations caused by minor and merely local causes. Every four or five years,

a large number of icebergs floating from Greenland, are stranded on the west coast of Iceland. Then the inhabitants know that their crops will fail in consequence of the fogs which are generated; and the dearth of food is not confined to the land, for the temperature of the water is so changed, that fish forsake the shore. Sometimes we set these icebergs afloat in a different direction, cooling the water for forty or fifty miles round, and sending us their chilling breezes when they float by our bay.

Then we take currents, and use the same liberties with them. We begin with the Gulf Stream, bearing the warm waters of the Gulf northeast, more than four thousand miles, to the western shore of Europe: making it perceptibly warmer than the opposite coast of America, and retaining warmth enough to cut off the glaciers of Spitzbergen at its beach. While the opposite glaciers of Greenland, having no such genial current, stretch out from shore, and furnish repeated crops of icebergs.

XIX.

My Dear Mary:

Having pointed out how local peculiarities affect particular climates, I show that the different position of whole continents influences the general climate, and may have made it hotter or colder than now, at different epochs. I ask them to show me, on the globe, what position of land would make the universal climate coldest, what would make it hottest. We imagine all the land dotted over the ocean in little islands, and the slight communication the inhabitants would then have, and their consequent want of civilization: or we imagine it collected into two compact masses, one in the frozen, and one in the torrid zone; and represent the unbounded astonishment of the natives at first learning each other's customs.

They have now learned to consider the globe as a collection of atoms, subject to incessant change; these atoms are worn, rent, impelled, by resistless agents; they know no rest. Attraction, chemical affinity, heat, electricity, summon them hither and thither, to perform their parts in the great whole. The agents which have changed the surface most extensively, are volcanoes and the wearing of water. Showers soften it, streams penetrate every where and bear off all they can loosen. Rock, mud, vegetable and animal remains, are borne to the bed of the ocean, to form the mass of future continents. Innumerable mollusca add their hard shells; coral and other zoophytes, stiffen and form reefs hundreds of miles long.

This goes on for centuries, until around the continents the ocean becomes shallow; and in many places studded with islands formed from coral reefs and old submarine volcanoes.

Then the subterranean heat, which has had an issue in old volcanoes, receives a new direction; or water, straying in the recesses of the earth, meets some inflammable substance, and heat is generated, as in the slaking of lime; gases are formed of prodigious power, and force themselves upward, and sideways, raising and often convulsing the crust. Sometimes the bed of the sea, for hundreds of miles, is raised; and the chains of coral islands become the nuclei of mountain ranges. The uplifting of the ground in Sweden, is a present instance of the slow action of volcanic power.

The coral reefs and islands furnish many interesting lessons. I show prints of lagoon islands, studding the volcanic regions of the sea, more thickly than the Australian islands. I describe the zoophytes, so singularly fitted to fill up the ocean: beginning their labors wherever volcanoes have raised their craters nearly to the surface of the waters, or former continents have sunk beneath it. In their rough branching surfaces, shells, and then sand, lodge. They now rise above the water in a circular form, with the steep banks of the submerged mountain on their outer side. On their inner side a lagoon of tranquil water is formed; life is active in these warm regions; plants, birds,

and small animals appear, and at last the abode is prepared for man.

Volcanoes are a fertile subject. The power of steam illustrates their external phenomena, eruptions, &c.

The effect of heat in fusing and promoting chemical union, is shown by glass. This stream of subterranean heat, more intense than any we can produce, passes upward, fusing and changing all it approaches. Dark limestone, full of shells and coral, becomes white statuary marble, sometimes for the distance of a quarter of a mile.

The breaking forth of volcanoes, the showers of fire and stones, the flowing of the lava, and all the circumstances attending eruptions, take great hold of children's imaginations. They rejoice that we have no volcanoes. Then I state how regular the volcanic action is; that along great tracts of land there are volcanoes, hot and mineral springs, and gaseous vapors. I describe the Andes agitated from Terra del Fuego to Mexico; their lofty peaks pouring forth flames; and often twenty or more of these flaming peaks within a short distance of each other. Not a year passes without earthquakes; and large tracts of land are often raised twenty feet. At last we come to regard the present outlines of land and water as transient; lasting enough for us, but transient compared to the whole existence of the globe. It has been happily said, that the outlines of land and water, are only as important, as the crater of Vesuvius between two eruptions.

The description of the present surface is geography.

XX.

My Dear Mary:

Success in teaching grammar depends particularly on the genius and judgment of the teacher, who must herself be interested in language, and able to trace it, as it has gradually come into being to express man's ideas; and who must also have a nice knowledge of its rules and refinements.

Every one knows that by speech we express our ideas; but this vague general knowledge is not sufficient; the child must follow the weaving of each thread, learn the force which each word gives to other words, beside fixing in his memory the arbitrary names and modes of expressing relations. If the child is suddenly introduced to this mass of rules and terms, and required to fix them in his mind, he is disheartened: yet it is desirable to begin grammar early, because it facilitates the acquiring of languages, and the understanding of all studies. In studying foreign languages he often gets a better abstract comprehension of grammar than in any other way. It is pleasant to know that *man*, *tears*, *globe*, were nouns among those old Romans, though called by other names. It is pleasant also to know that they needed nouns, verbs, and adjectives, to express themselves, just as we do; to learn the lasting nature and superiority of the thing expressed, and to consider the name as an arbitrary contrivance, convenient to designate it. I very early lead children to observe nouns and verbs, and at the age of six years, I give them definite instruction as to their meaning and use.

Grammar is chiefly valuable as analysis; but this is too laborious to exercise young minds long, so I allow their fancy to construct language at the same time: in this manner giving them rest and amusement.

I represent a man in the infancy of the world. He is surrounded by sensible objects, and appropriates a sound or name to each; he gives names also to the emotions they excite in himself; and he names persons. Thus he forms three kinds of nouns, of which I first give instances, and

then each girl writes an example on the black-board, and tells whether it is abstract, common, or proper, and why. Then in some book, they point out the nouns; and say whether each expresses an emotion, idea, thing, or person. At first they call other words abstract nouns; say they have an idea of *black*, an idea of *forward*, but at last they learn to admit no words, but such as not merely suggest a fact, but themselves express the fact. They continue this until they can point out all the nouns in a page without fatigue; then I introduce number; ask how the savage could express to another whether he had seen one lion or more, and show how much shorter it is to say lions, than to repeat the word for each; then they point out the number of each noun in the printed book.

Next I take pronouns, words standing *for* nouns. I show how inconvenient it would be, to speak the name at full length, every time we mention the person; to say, "*Elisabeth*, lay aside *Elisabeth's* writing, and take up *Elisabeth's* book;" and it would have been still worse in ancient times, when the names were often very long. Think of a dialogue between a Sardanapalus and a Melchisedec, in which these names take the place of *you* and *me!* Children perceive at once the tediousness and uselessness of names when both parties are present. I explain grammatical person, and have each pronoun learned and declined, whenever it occurs. They tell to what the relative and personal pronouns refer; if adjective pronouns are mentioned, I say they only point out their nouns, they do not stand for them.

The savage observes also that the things around him, *act;* the tree *grows*, the water *flows*, he himself *moves;* these are all *acts*, but not the same *act;* each must be expressed by a separate word, and these words being thought the most important in the sentence, are called *the words* or *verbs*. Then I explain the active verbs, and have lists of them made on the black-board, and sentences formed in which they are used, and the reason given for their being called active. The agent and object are named, and I now explain the cases of nouns, and state that the nominative and object may be distinguished by

their position and the probable meaning of the sentence; and that we used to express possession by such an expression as, "*John, his book,*" afterward contracted to "*John's book.*"

The other kinds of verbs are practiced upon and sought in like manner; the passive form I show to be sometimes more convenient than the active: as when the object is one and the agents many. For instance, "*the bird is tired,*" tells us all we wish to know. We might say, *flying, seeking food, hopping from branch to branch, &c.* have tired the bird. Then I show that our imaginary savage found in objects, certain diversities; this tree was *green*, that *bare*, and he *added adjectives* to their names to express the states and qualities of the things. I let one child tell me the adjectives of color, another those of quantity, praise, &c.; and afterwards point them out in the book, with the nouns they describe. Then I say, here are two birds with sweet notes, but one sings better than the other: how shall we mark the difference in their voices? We can do it by adding two letters to the adjective which describes them. But I will inflict on you, my dear Mary, no more similar processes: you may not have my fondness for details. We examine every part of speech; first show the need of expressing a certain class of ideas, then the words invented for the purpose, and then point out these words in a book.

We use each part of speech in forming and analyzing sentences, while its meaning is fresh in the thoughts. I am a great economist in this respect. I never let my pupils learn words or rules to lay by, but bring them into use at once. I cannot bear to have a child learn, and forget, and learn again; and use is the only mode of engraving knowledge. After the first simple language, which answered the most immediate purposes, slighter feelings and distinctions were designated; a great variety of modes of expression were created. Not only new parts of speech, but new ways of changing and combining the old were formed, and relations were expressed by varying the position of words in a sentence. I think children taught as I have described, would find no difficulty in understanding this. They would find blank verse as easy as simple prose, be-

cause they would be guided by the meaning. I have known children perplexed when they began Latin, by the new order of the words; and quite surprised to learn that several different modes of arranging them were equally good, and that often only custom made one so much more agreeable to us than another: that *bread me give*, and *me give bread* are as natural arrangements as ours, and as expressive of the idea. I remark that people were always improving on their inventions, and not satisfied with having language merely useful, wished to make it a delicate instrument, suited to all strains, and agreeable to the ear, so they introduced refinements, and made it rich in idioms and synonymes. Each new circumstance or emotion was uttered in a new form, and the rules by which these forms are constructed are grammar — a study in some of its details unattractive, but which must be understood by all who would enter into the thoughts of others, or express their own with precision. As we do not think without these symbols, the accuracy of thought depends greatly on the nicety with which these symbols represent it. I often please myself with considering how much richer in meaning the same word is to one man than to another. Genius gives life, from its own intense life, to any word; and feeling and association give to insignificant ones a power which reaches the soul. But these are beyond our control. All we can do to make the symbols faithful and significant, is to render the meaning as luminous as possible, the first time the symbol is presented. All we can do to enrich each symbol with association and suggestion is to give to the mind every variety of knowledge, and as much as it can bear. How much deeper meaning does a man find in his own language, who recognizes the blended streams of his Norman and Saxon ancestors! Their spirit lingers in every word, breathing of the mighty past.

Children generally rebel against grammar, because it seems to them useless. But when taught thus, they feel its use, and if there is a due proportion of analysis and construction, they find it interesting. Sometimes, indeed, we meet with a mind that finds no pleasure in analysis; but

even such a mind may be led to analyze what it has itself constructed. I would not omit the exercise on this account, neither would I devote more time to it; but I would press it more earnestly during the time allowed; for you know it is my plan to urge what a child is deficient in, that symmetry may be preserved, and more time left to bestow where there is a gift, and promise of excellence. Most children like to pull a sentence to pieces, and tell exactly what it expresses, and how they know it. They become very discriminating by this exercise, receive another's meaning precisely, and learn to convey their own fully and with ease. These two things are very conducive to preserving good will; for I have too good an opinion of my race to suppose there would be so many disagreements, if there were fewer misunderstandings. The tale of the outcast, who throws into each word the wo of years, falls without reality on the ear of the nursling of wealth. Sin, bereavement, despair, what do they mean to the child of happiness? It is the tendency of high civilization to multiply words, and at the same time to express whole tragedies by one short phrase, and thus to produce a want of earnestness, and a dangerous levity, just as the easy transfer of property by bank notes and checks, instead of gold and solid land, is thought to have injured morals, by leading to thoughtless risks, because men cannot realize that these notes, passed so easily from hand to hand, are the symbols of actual property.

You see I employ a great deal of training in these preparatory studies. It is not because I overrate them, but that they may occupy as little time, on the whole, as possible. It is quite embarrassing that the means, (because we must have them,) should be so early and so urgently presented. Will not these, enforced almost as duties, fix themselves in the tender mind as the most important things in life, and hide the portals of the everlasting temple? I have felt the same difficulty in moral education. In civilized society we lay so many restrictions on children, that it is surprising their moral sense ever works itself free, or that they do not grow up thinking that banging doors, romping about, and such misdemeanors,

are as heinous as moral offences. To prevent a child's hurting itself, or doing mischief, we lay great stress on particular offences, so that a little child playing with fire often receives a punishment which the parent renders severe to save it from like danger, but which may make a false impression on the mind, and cause the act to seem to the child a moral offence. I explain as far as possible to the child, that he is punished to prevent his hurting himself. For a moral offence I would give no punishment which did not follow it, as one of the consequences; I would only induce sorrow for it. No external punishment can wipe out a moral offence, or change the source whence it arose. With the idea of being fully punished, comes the idea of having expiated it; of having incurred a debt, suffered for it, and settled all without an inward change; and a moral offence is treated as an equivalent to physical or intellectual privation. I would let the child take the separation from friends, or other evils, as one consequence; but I would urge the more sad consequences; that he had broken the law of God, hurt his own soul, made it more difficult to do right, or even to know the right, and given pain to his parents. I would cause him a spiritual suffering, more keen and lasting than any other consequence, and I would often refer to it, and keep the remembrance alive. It is to me very doubtful how far men have a right to step in and adjudge a strict external punishment for a moral offence, except in self-defence. For we may suppose that He who knoweth the heart and its bitterness, chooseth hidden and loving ways to bring about the return of the sinner.

XXI.

My Dear Mary:

I spoke in my last of the importance of keeping the great ideas present, while we secure skill and knowledge of details. I will now mention another division, which may be made among the studies. In some, as spelling, reading, arithmetic, I cannot give much assistance; the children must make each fact their own, and themselves perform each operation. In grammar and geography I can help them more. In sciences, in natural history, and in history, I state the facts, explain, classify them, and show the law, and they reach these only through me. Thus the first question to be decided in each study is, how far I had best give aid? Languages belong to both of these divisions, for I can aid them very much, and still a geat deal must be done by themselves. Languages enlarge and enrich the mind, exercise the powers of analysis and combination, compel accuracy, and strengthen the memory. It has been said, that a man is so often a man, as he knows different languages; and the number spoken by many persons abroad, proves the ease with which they are acquired. No doubt some persons acquire them more readily than others, and one who is slow of eye or ear would be unwise to attempt more than one or two. But a great deal may be accomplished if they are taught while the organs are flexible, the perceptions keen, and the mind unembarrassed. They should also be learned thoroughly, methodically, and usually one at a time; and the knowledge should be used as it is acquired. I prefer teaching both Latin and German before French, not only because they are the keys of our language, but for their innate worth; Latin for its simplicity, regularity and conciseness; German for its expressiveness and overflowing wealth. The German tongue always seems to me like the Christmas present a good notable German mother prepares for her absent son. She makes it up of substantial gifts, comfortable wrappers, the product of her

industry; huge tomes, criticisms, squibs, caricatures, to let him know all that is going on in the good town; the sister's embroidered smoking-cap, the brother's last theme, the little boy's puppets, made all by himself; and Cousin Wilhelmina's sketch of the family, not omitting the absent one. These and many more the mother stows into the groaning box, defending each by some argument satisfactory to herself, and protesting all the time that Gottfried will think himself quite forgotten. As the good woman would make the heaped-up box the vehicle of her yearning affection, the German author would make his writing the precise expression of his entire thought. If the words are not sufficient, he prefixes the expressive particles; developes one shade of meaning after another, heaps word on word, superlative on superlative, qualifying, explaining, holding back one part, until the other has had its effect, and the whole idea obtains satisfactory utterance. At first, German appears loaded and confused, from the very simplicity of its formation. When a new expression was wanted, it was formed in the most natural manner from old ones; and we see its grammar at once, in these successive changes, just as we trace the progress of an art in the huge wooden machine, whose wheels added to wheels are so many memoranda of obstacles overcome. In the patent iron machine all trace of the process is obliterated, and we too often use it without knowing how many powers are at work. In the machine, however, the convenient result answers our whole purpose; but language loses force, when, from any cause, it ceases to convey the original meaning. This is often lost from over use, as when the happy expression of a great man, bandied about in newspapers, becomes unmeaning and tiresome. Thoughts too sententiously delivered, too much filed away, lose weight; and words have to me more significance, when, like the German words, they proclaim their origin, and tell their own tale. The French words are just the reverse of these. They have been polished until they have lost their original meaning; and it takes a life-time to learn all the proprieties arbitrarily connected with them. The idioms, instead of arising from a national mode of treating subjects, are often

bon-mots, and court phrases, passed into the current coin of the realm. But there is one reason for beginning French first. Its sounds are more unlike ours, and children lose the flexibility of their organs quite early; and as long as it is the most universal, and the polite language, it will be that most frequently learned. As I have my youngest pupils in the house with me, I begin in what is certainly the best mode, the mode in which they learned their own language. At table, at play, while walking, I mention French names and phrases, and tell them "that is what French children say." They can as easily remember a French and an English name for a thing, as two English ones, and hearing them without the spelling, they are not perplexed. A child should be six years old to begin to learn French in school. Some persons may think, perhaps, that I teach French too thoroughly; that it merits only to be read and pronounced well, and that I take the time from more important things; but half of those who learn it will never learn any other language; and I think it very desirable that every one should undergo the discipline of studying one language thoroughly, beside his own; and knowledge gained thus, remains through life, or at least, can be easily recalled.

I teach the alphabet, and the *b*, *a*, *ba*-s with the French pronunciation, practicing each sound until they can utter it with ease. Then in a little book, called 'Lectures Graduées,' I spell each word with them, dividing it, pronouncing it, and naming the accent in the spelling, precisely as French children are taught. As soon as they can spell, they learn a few words every day, and recite first the French, and then the English, still spelling every day, to keep in mind the sounds of the letters. In a month or more, I give some printed rules for pronouncing French. Though these are not of universal application, they are guides in nine cases out of ten, and if used with a teacher, will not mislead. Children are discouraged by the total newness of French sounds, and are afraid to open their lips.

A new study is like a tiresome or wintry journey, where the best defence is a brave and cheerful spirit;

therefore I am very careful to remove all obstacles of a depressing nature, and all fear. I often give a slight sketch of the new study, touch on its difficulties as needing only good heart, and show what particular efforts will be required to overcome them. Then I remind them that they have left many difficulties behind, and have enjoyed rich rewards for their labors. I tell them, that I suppose they think it a great undertaking to learn another language, but it is a very simple thing; at first, they have only to learn a new name for old things; they would not find it difficult to call *a bowl, a basin,* if their mother desired it. I acknowledge there are greater difficulties in learning French because the sounds are unlike ours, and the same characters represent sounds different from ours. But neither of these are insuperable; there are many sounds in the human voice, beside those we use in our language; some nations use nasal sounds chiefly, others gutturals; those who live in a cold climate keep their mouths shut, and utter nothing but consonants; those who live in a warm climate use open sounds, or vowels. I set the children to inventing new sounds, and when the prejudice in favor of their own language is quite overcome, I teach the French sounds. Then I tell them that we received our characters from the Romans; that we can still read their manuscripts, though we do not know precisely how they sounded the letters; that when the Roman empire fell asunder, some of the provinces retained the written characters; that, had there been steamboats and railroads, so that all the people could travel, and hear each other speak, the Latin language might have been spoken by the Italians, Spaniards, French, English, and perhaps Germans, to this day. But these nations were for many ages separated from each other, and each formed its own mode of pronouncing the letters, or adapted them to sounds they used before they had a written language. At present we are to learn only the sounds which the French attach to these characters; but we must know these as thoroughly as the English sounds before we can proceed. Then I remind them, that in English each vowel has several sounds, and give instances; and say that by patience they have learned all

these, and the French sounds are not so numerous, and are more regular. They take their printed books, and I give out the long and broad sound of *a*, and mention when it takes place. We repeat the examples very often, taking pains to get the exact sound. The next day each scholar recites the cases in which *a* is broad, and gives a few examples; then I point to the *a*-s in a page of 'Lectures Graduées,' and ask of each, if it is long, and the reason. Sometimes the children are ready for a new rule after one recitation. When there is a great variety of cases, they require more practice to point them out easily. Then I give the sound of *a* short and open, and mention the positions in which it occurs; this is learned and recited in the same manner; and the next day they can tell all the simple *a*-s. Several sentences are spelled, and phrases recited each day. This gives variety; and, though it would be irksome to older girls, the obstacles are just the size for little folks. I go over every simple and every compound sound in the same manner; they learn first the sound, then in what positions of the character it takes place; they then select these positions in the book, and recite the rule. This requires short daily lessons for a year; but it is learned for life. Then the child takes up her French book, and if she hesitates, I say, "*e*, with the grave accent; what sound has that?" and if her rule is not ready, she must learn it again. With these rules to guide her, she is willing to pronounce by herself. Of course, we have met with some exceptions, which I have mentioned, and they have marked these in their books, or made lists of them; and they know the meaning of some hundreds of words thoroughly. At this stage, if they are ten years old, I give an easy book, and let them look for the words. If younger, I give them an interlined book; because the object is to teach as many French words as possible, and they would learn very few, if they had them all to seek in the dictionary. The fable is read in the part of the book that is not interlined; then pronounced and partly spelled; and then I ask almost every French word, and some of the English words. In a few months they can do this with ease, and then I proceed to

the study of the French verbs. I know of no way to make these interesting; but they may be learned with tolerable ease when the pronunciation is known, and only the changes of the moods and tenses are new. I keep the children in the interlined book, until the regular and irregular verbs are perfectly learned, and something is known of the articles, adjectives, and pronouns. Then the child is prepared to take an easy book, and work her way on to the hardest. All a teacher has to do henceforward, is to explain difficult passages, point out conventionalisms, idioms, and exceptions in pronunciation. The lessons should at first be short. The child should be required to select the verbs and nouns, as in English grammar, and point out their relations to other words; she should give the synopsis of the verbs, in whatever number and person that is she is parsing; form it from its primitive tenses, tell how it is used, &c. I always let her practice every thing frequently at first, that she may not lose the links, and afterward more rarely. When parsing is discontinued, writing exercises takes its place. This should be practiced until they are written correctly, as to grammar and construction. Those who would write or speak French elegantly, must learn of a native; therefore I have not mentioned writing it thus or speaking it. Perhaps you will think all these minutiæ needless; that I make it too laborious; but the minutiæ are suited to the grasp, and the time is spent now, to be saved when more valuable. A child taught thus, will find no difficulties after two or three years study, and we know how many children study that length of time in a less methodical manner, without learning either to pronounce or to translate.

XXII.

My Dear Mary:

As I have described my mode of teaching French so fully, I will not say much about Latin. I am disposed to have every girl of tolerable industry and capacity learn it. Its grammar thoroughly learned gives insight into most others. It also gives a more definite meaning to our language, and the clue to French, Spanish, and particularly to Italian. I begin it when French has been studied two years, and its first difficulties are overcome. I use the Vocabulary and Phædrus, that the children may become interested in the language before they begin the grammar. In all the lessons I am very particular to have not merely the quantity but the accent preserved. I do not allow the nouns or the verbs to be declined in that hasty, slovenly manner, which is too common. I trace the English and French words formed from the Latin ones, and show their changes. By doing this every time a word appears, it is fixed in their memory and made interesting. Children perceive and remember such things wonderfully, if they are once pointed out. I insist on perfect accuracy in the recitations, and reward it by interesting details about the Roman history and customs. Words are rather dry, and if I am satisfied with the recitation I allow the lesson to suggest what it will; and a good deal of information is brought out in the course of studying Latin, which otherwise might be passed over. Even the Vocabulary, by giving the names of common things, introduces an account of the habits of the Romans. Thus *stylus*, a pen, if the lesson has been well recited, gives occasion to describe their mode of writing; but if the lesson be not satisfactory, a glimpse of the unknown is afforded and withdrawn with a regret. Sometimes I brighten a tiresome lesson by the beautiful and expressive creations of mythology. The Grecian conceptions should not be known, only through the Roman ap-

prehension of them; but the constant allusion to them in Latin books gives them an air of reality, and serves for an introduction. Did you ever observe how much interest children take in any thing suggested by the text; and how difficult it is to interest them at once in that about which they know nothing. I have often been disappointed, on bringing into school an account of some fact or discovery which interested me, to find the scholars quite insensible to it. They would listen eagerly at first, but I soon saw it was not appreciated; they had never met the difficulty, and could not rejoice in its solution. I have met with similar disappointments in their reception of books. If it is a scientific book, or one whose worth has been tested by ages, I know that it is their want of preparation, and it loses no value in my eyes; but if it is more a matter of taste, I feel quite a painful anxiety that it should please. We, who know the worth of all knowledge, are scarcely aware how exclusively children value that of which they have felt the want. I recollect in Mrs. Barbauld's early lessons, she gives a pleasing account of the attraction of straws by amber. I never knew a young child interested in it, because no young child could ever see why amber should not draw straws.

Mythology is one of the subjects I wished to introduce as a lesson, and which they did not appreciate. Since then, I have kept it to brighten the duller paths. I cannot bear that the conceptions of the Greeks, so noble, so suggestive, so full of meaning even in the details, so teeming with life and beauty, should be wanting to their education; yet, if we offer a small book to be studied, they have merely the bare description of an imaginary being; the grace, the fragrance, the reality is gone. If we give a larger book, the child is perplexed by the multitude of new words and strange persons, and wants to know all about each, ending all inquiries by the unanswerable one, Is it true? and, why should we learn it, if it is not? It is revolting to most children's sense of truth and of the value of time to have any thing given them to study, which is not true. They like to read fairy and fictitious tales, but they demand something, upon which they can rest with perfect faith for

their graver hours. Beside, there is no age, in very early life, at which mythology, as a whole, can be introduced. Conceived by minds like ours in nature, but very differently situated, it presents the grandest eternal truths, blended with trivial or indefensible circumstances. In some instances, the garb is puerile or extravagant, and if we offer the whole to the child, it seizes the absurd incidents, or those offensive to its moral sense, and cannot enter into the deeper meaning. If we offer it to older girls, they see the inward meaning, but reject the embodying. It is only when we are still older, that we become more tolerant, and welcome worth in whatever strange apparel the age has dressed it. By teaching it orally, I can adapt my interpretations to different ages. I often repeat the same story, or ask for it when alluded to in different books. Thus something of the Grecian spirit is imbibed.

XXIII.

My Dear Mary:

Already I anticipate your objections to the details in my last. You are in pain for my poor scholars; you think I demand too much acquirement from them; that I keep them too much in the concrete, the region of petty things. All the time I was writing of arithmetic, grammar, and the languages, there was in my ear a distant murmur of disapprobation, and as I am very fond of answering objections before they can be stated, I intend you shall receive this to-morrow, and look very silly over your penned remonstrance. I acknowledge, that thus far the concrete predominates, as it must, considered as to time given in early youth; but I should be as unwilling as you to let this predominance continue; it should diminish gradually, as the mind gradually rises to the perception of abstract truth.

Nor are these their only present influences; I have accounted to you only for the early part of the forenoon. If there are no lessons to be recited a second time, we have nearly an hour's conversation after intermission. All the day's lessons are recited before intermission, and those for the next day, are learned after the conversation. And let me remind you, that this hour comes daily, for ten years, giving time, you will suppose, for more than I could furnish from my unassisted head. It is during this time that the elements of the sciences have been communicated to the little ones. When they are older, I use a text-book, that we may proceed regularly and omit nothing. I look over the lesson previously, consult other books, think how to present it and illustrate it, and determine how much they can comprehend. The text-book often remains with the mark at the same place for some time, but at last the mark moves on. In this manner I first took Grund's Physics, and each paragraph furnished several conversations, and the illustrations which the children offered, proved how fully they understood some phenomena which to us appear difficult. I remember one girl perceived instantly how water would find its level on a globe. After some months given to physics, I take some very different subject — perhaps the natural history of a particular class of animals, or the physiology of plants, according to the season. I represent the principle of life entering into matter, moulding it, expanding it, and giving birth to new and beautiful existences. I describe the simplest animals and the simplest vegetables, so similar that we can scarcely distinguish them; then, as they become more perfect, forming two ascending series, continually more separate and unlike each other as they rise. Thus the samphire and the prickly pear seem only a succession of expansions of loose pulpy matter enclosed in a skin, and each part may be separated and grow into a whole plant. The aquatic worms are a similar prolongation of loose sacks which become ribbed across in certain places; at each division appear two blank points, the beginnings of eyes; the separations become more marked and the body divides into several bodies which are perfect nereis. Some polypi increase by putting forth new tubercles, like

a bulbous root or crocus. Then we compare the finely organized animals and plants, and find them unlike in many particulars, and not to be mistaken for each other. The lion has a heart, lungs, brain, red blood, terrible eyes, strong limbs, a flowing mane, a separate organ for each function, and many functions peculiar to animal life. The oak has become a community of distinct individuals bound up in one, having a common life and an individual life renewed each spring. By its yearly growth, it has accumulated a great trunk, spreading branches, rugged bark, and it has many organs unknown to the cactus, each with its separate function peculiar to vegetable life. Then we notice that animals have an internal organic life, like that of plants; have circulation and respiration, and also an outward life, of the senses, which makes them perceive, desire, and seek foreign things. Accordingly the plant lives and dies where it first took root, having very little connexion with external things, and no power of locomotion. But the animal approaches and shuns things at pleasure, having the power of moving about.

Then from a good author we read and talk about some one class of birds or animals; we observe how they are distinguished from others; remark their structure, habits, haunts. After a few months given to these, and many repetitions of their anatomy and physiology whenever minor varieties are introduced, I say to them that they must keep these in their memory, and by and by we shall take up another class.

Then I pass to chemistry: I give instances of motion and change in the inorganic world, for which physical laws do not account. Vapor rises and forms clouds, no mechanical force impels it; it falls and becomes solid ice; it expands and bears along the load of a hundred horses. What makes it solid and expands it? What moves the lightning and the northern lights? The principle of life does not directly change water and air to leaves and juicy fruits, nor directly color the blossom and the wood. As far as we can penetrate, these effects are brought about by certain chemical affinities in the particles, which make them unite and form new substances. In the animal

the principle of life does not convert simple nourishment immediately to bones, sinews, flesh, and fine organs; but these are formed by what we call affinities in matter itself. These laws, which supersede mechanical laws, and which serve the principle of life, we call chemical. They, and the subjects connected with them, form interesting topics, because they are so frequently suggested by the common occurrences of life.

In the spring, I take up vegetable physiology. I begin with the seed; describe its swelling; the chemical changes which take place to nourish the germ; its radicle fixedly seeking the earth; its plumula as obstinately turned toward the light; the activity of each organ from the moment it is developed; the root instinctively imbibing nourishment and passing it up to the tiny leaves; the leaves or aërial roots breathing in nourishment from the air and sending down solid particles to form the wood; and the stem serving as a living soil to produce new shoots. Then I describe our trees with their wide dome-like tops and irregular branches, bearing small fruits and leaves, and the tropical trees shooting upward a confused mass of wood and bark, often very slender, without branches, and of enormous height, and frequently bearing on their summit only a single fruit. The immense size and deep green of their leaves; their peculiar habits and productions; their rapid vegetation; their trunks abounding with milky juices and aromatic odors; their fruits so luxuriant and delicious, and of a size unknown here; all form interesting lessons. Then I tell them that throughout our trees are dormant buds which may be called into action by light and by abundance of heat and nourishment; that some of these become leaves and branches: others, flowers and fruits. When a sufficient number of leaves has been developed to supply air and nourishment to the plant, shorter shoots are sent out, but, being supplied with the same abundance of sap, they swell at the extremities and form richer organs. Instead of the simple green leaves, disposed sparingly along the stem, many of the germs which would have formed them are brought together in a whorl; the first whorl is exposed to the air; it has usually no beauty, and often keeps the form of leaves;

from its shelter bursts another whorl, colored by a chemical process, broad, soft and brilliant, forming the corolla of the flower. The corolla folds over an inner whorl until this requires the sun, then turns back and falls; the inner whorl drops its farina on the pistil and the seed is prepared. With how many wonders and beauties has it been ushered in; not striking from their magnitude, but exquisite in their adaptation! From the first sprouting of the seed to the ripening of the fruit, how subordinate is each part to the whole! what a lesson to the mortal who complains of his lot as an obscure or fruitless part of the great whole! What would become of a plant had each part free-will and selfish desires? Would it adapt itself to circumstances of climate and situation, and thus prepare more delicate and lovely developements? In India, the horse-chestnut exposes its leaves and blossoms bare to the air. Here it wraps them in countless covers, and each scale is a leaf sacrificed to our colder climate. It would be melancholy to pull asunder the leaf-bud of a walnut and count its golden scales, had not Nature, in denying them life as leaves, given them a new form of beauty, folding them round the tender bud in a long slender cone. To these degenerate leaves, we owe the cup of the acorn, the cone of the fir, and other of our most graceful forms. Then I show how Nature, by directing the energy to any one part or organ, developes peculiar properties, and makes it agreeable or useful to man. In warm countries, out of a bare rock rises the tree so famed by travellers for its vegetable milk. Its leaves are dry and leathery; the juice tends to the trunk, is elaborated there, and yields an abundant and refreshing draught in a country where months pass without rain. The butter-tree, the sugar-maple, the numerous gum and India-rubber trees, show us what abundance may be prepared by a single organ.

Then I show the formation of fruit; perhaps the most astonishing instance of the variety Nature produces. By the simplest means she makes a delicious fruit, now of the calyx, now of the seed-vessel, now of the seed itself, or even of its receptacle; and changes the envelope into the most fragrant spice; or into cotton, abundant minister to

the wants of man. But I will dwell no longer on this or other sciences; you are now familiar with my mode of teaching.

XXIV.

My Dear Mary:

There is one subject which I have not touched upon; yet its culture belongs to every age. Nothing can exceed the distress caused to most children over six years, by a demand for composition; but these children would have been willing, at three, to describe every walk, object, or amusement they had enjoyed. At that age, need of sympathy and their great life lead them to reproduce; and the novelty of objects and the nice perceptions of children make them describe vividly and graphically. But we are apt to be too selfish and too much cumbered with other things. We check the flow of talk as it is gushing forth, and then, when we have leisure and inclination, we call the child to us, and wonder that it has nothing to say. If we are sitting alone in a room with nothing to engage a child, we may, with all our resources, find it difficult to fix its attention; but if we take it the length of the street, we shall be overwhelmed with questions. It has not in itself sufficient subjects for thought, and we must present these, if we would have the child talk or write.

How rare are conversational powers in this country! Perhaps the reserve and constraint of manner which we inherit from our pilgrim fathers is one cause. All may have these powers; the universe lies open to all; all have thoughts and feelings which may be uttered without violating dignity and delicacy of character. But we lose the habit and power of expressing ourselves freely before we

begin to value it. Among grown persons we are contented if each speaks well on any one subject; and there is a tacit sliding into that. Now I do not object to a person's being particularly interested in one subject, and therefore excelling in it, but I do object to his being limited to this. And I also object to the conversation of any coterie or clique whatever, as being liable to take always one character.

Society should answer and sympathize with all our wants. When only one power is gratified, it is soon wearied, and longs for rest. We feel this with highly-cultivated people, if they are not our near friends also; and we turn to the hearty cordial human natures for refreshment. But the discourse of these does not satisfy us long, unless they will accompany us into the regions of higher thought. Again, conversation too abstract fatigues us, and we are glad to hear about things and persons; we listen eagerly to traits of character, scattered like gold-dust through life, until we are tired of collecting particles, and return to the silent mine of thought.

He who is alive to all, and can express all, unites all excellences of conversation. He is all things to all men, because he contains all, and his society is a fairy land, where each finds what he seeks.

Nearly the same training will secure the power of conversing and of writing well; and both are far more in our power than we suppose. I speak now chiefly of the latter, which beside the requisites for conversation requires the power of concentrating thought.

Savages, and children under little restraint, generally possess eloquence and ease of expression: and children should be encouraged to speak naturally and freely of all they see, think, and feel. Thus their conversation will be what it should be, the perfect reflection of all objects, colored by the individual soul; or rather the soul's myrrh and incense, its fruit and flowers, elaborated from the crude materials it has imbibed.

They should utter every emotion; they should make inquiries to the purpose, state their difficulties clearly, and strive always to express precisely what they mean. We

are too indulgent to them in this respect. We are afraid to check their confidence, and are so glad to have them use their powers, that we are satisfied with very imperfect execution. I do not quite agree with Dr. Johnson that if a boy saw a thing out of one window, and said he saw it out of another, he should be whipped; but I do think the habit of describing accurately would be cheaply purchased by many whippings.

I read anecdotes from biography and mythology, apologues, fables, traits of heroism and generosity, and accustom the children to draw from each a moral. The next day they are repeated by the little girls, and written by the older ones.

Meanwhile, the little girls are acquiring ease in handwriting, by making new sentences from their French and Latin words; by writing down verbs through all their moods; and by the other exercises I have mentioned.

When they can write without undue anxiety concerning spelling, punctuation, blots, and all minor troubles, they write descriptions of simple objects, such as bellows, spectacles, carriages; mention their materials, and construction, and uses. They describe buildings and gardens, or rides they have taken. They write imaginary journeys, describing the people, customs, and scenery. Of course they consult books for these descriptions, but do not copy them. They write recollections of what they have read or heard during the week, translations, and turn blank verse into prose.

Some new thought is thus elicited; but I never require any thing original until the age of fourteen. At this age, the mind can generally fix itself on a subject, consider some of its bearings, and treat it clearly. At first, I give some hints, if they are very much desired by the children; but as soon as possible, I withdraw all leadings: for I wish not to impress myself, but to bring out their individuality. I let them choose their own subjects, if they are suggestive, and not exclusively of one cast.

I have now brought them to the age of fourteen; let me tell you of what they will then be capable.

Their geography, grammar, and all elementary studies,

may now be laid aside. They are good arithmeticians, and know something of algebra and geometry. They can read French, easy German books, and Virgil, so as to enjoy it. I should not give Virgil at an earlier age. In all languages I give many easy books, and proceed gradually to those more difficult. Some teachers make a point of having each book more difficult than that which preceded; and if the time be short and limited, and the pupil is to be fitted for particular books, this must be done. Parents often think variety in books needless; the time given to languages is short, and the pupil wishes to read the most celebrated and difficult authors. But this is not the way we teach English. We do not use Mrs. Trimmer and Goldsmith and Rasselas in quick succession. We give many authors, varying in style, and alike easy, before presenting an obscure or concise one.

All difficult study of languages is now over. Italian may be added whenever convenient; generally not till the pupil has finished reading Latin, because three languages at a time are quite enough. I should have long lessons learned, more than could be recited, so that some knowledge of the literature should be obtained as well as of the language.

Algebra and geometry should now be studied faithfully: and the sciences taken up one at a time, and studied from the best authors, and many books relating to each read. A few months given to each science, would make the universe richer and more significant during the whole life.

In history, I would have long lessons and finished recitations, and occasionally written abstracts of particular occurrences or characters. History and biography are however rather for the closet than the school; it requires extensive reading to seize the connexion of events, and remember persons and events. One must know a great deal of history to enjoy it fully or to remember it well.

And now, my dear Mary, I have given you my ideas as fully as I can. You know I brought to the task the thoughts of a life, but the practical experience of only one year; and this must excuse what is crude or omitted in what I

have written. If Experience does for me what I expect from her, I may some day send you something more complete than these *gropings;* my only wish while writing this has been, that some one of more powerful grasp and wider experience would write it for me. But it is a wise Providence which compels us to think for ourselves. None but ourselves can draw down to our individual circumstances, the light of Eternal Truth.